The African Communist

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HANDS OFF THE FRONTLINE STATES!

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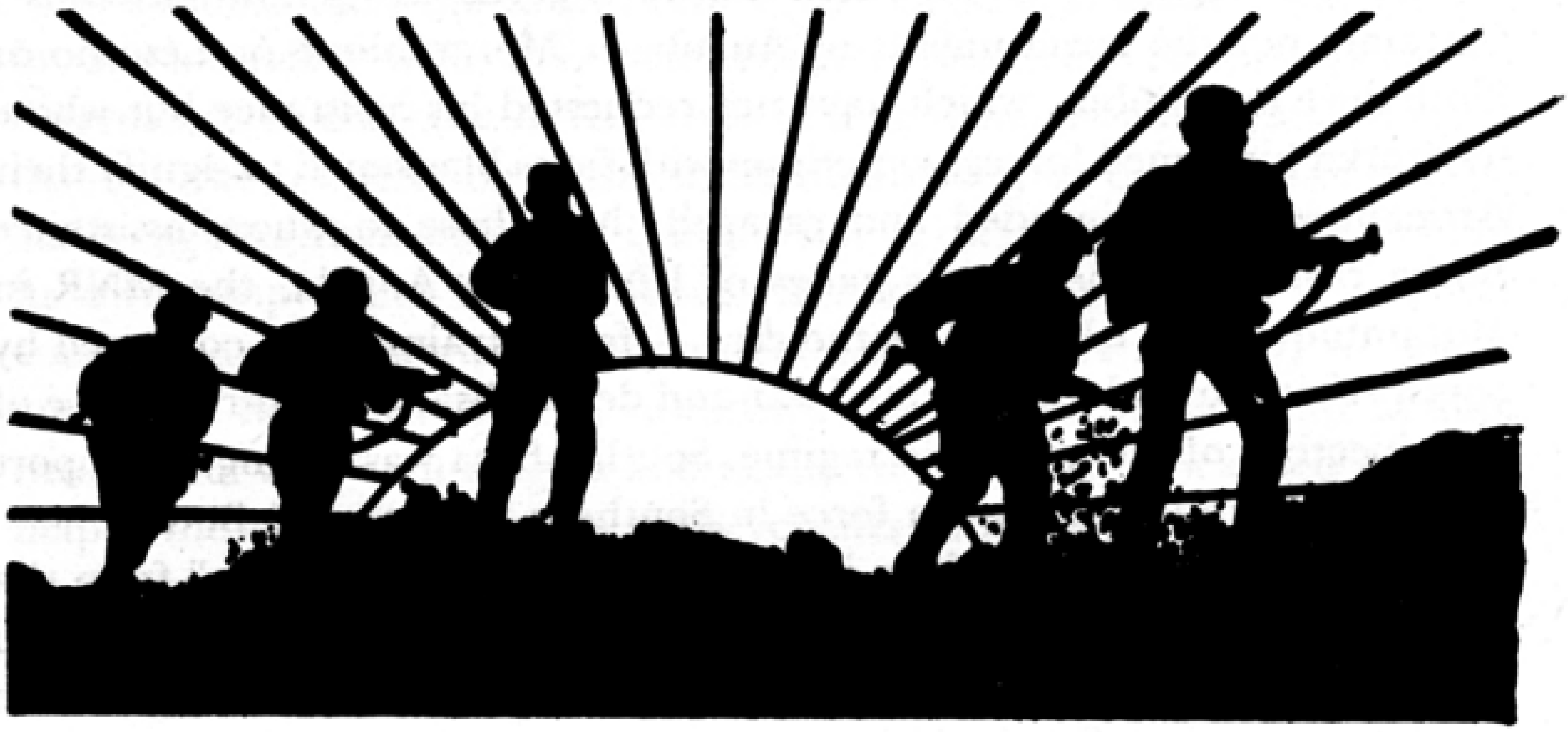
Cover picture: 1983 May Day demonstration in Maputo (photo AIM)



EDITORIAL NOTES

HANDS OFF THE FRONTLINE STATES!

It is becoming clearer day by day that in its relations with neighbouring states, the Botha regime is following the example set for it by Israel in the Middle East and Reagan in Central America. All must be cowed into submission to the dictates of Pretoria, some by economic pressure and blackmail, some by outright military action. And everything that South Africa does or contemplates is justified in the name of anti-communism. "I'm an African, and I believe communism is bad for Africa", said Premier P.W. Botha in an interview with the *New York Times* last February. "If fellow Africans are threatened by the evils of communism, we shall assist them when our assistance is requested".

It is interesting to note whom Botha regards as "fellow Africans". Certainly not the governments of Angola or Mozambique or Lesotho or Zimbabwe or Zambia, which have not requested his assistance but whose territories his armed forces, sometimes with faces blackened to signify their Africanness, have invaded and ravaged. No, those to whose assistance Botha rushes are the bandit gangs of UNITA in Angola, the MNR in Mozambique, the LLA in Lesotho etc. — forces trained and equipped by South Africa to undertake acts of war and destabilisation in furtherance of the objectives of the apartheid regime. South Africa was willing to support *any* anti-communist guerrilla force in Southern Africa, said Botha.

The claim that South Africa is faced with a "total onslaught" from the forces of international communism and "Russian imperialism" is also without foundation. Those who fight against the South African regime are not foreigners but South Africans opposed to white minority rule and determined to achieve the national liberation of the oppressed black majority denied basic rights and opportunities in the land of their birth. Botha acknowledges no kinship with the members of the African National Congress, his own fellow-countrymen to whom he denies the right to vote. What sort of an African is this who treats the Africans of his own country as enemies, refuses them citizenship and forces them into exile or Bantustans? If Botha has a "total onslaught" on his hands, it is of his own making because, far from being an African, he is a white racist exclusivist who believes that capitalism is good for the white minority and the rest can go hang if they don't like it.

Nor is it only the ruling Nationalist Party that is to blame for the escalating danger of war in southern Africa. When in the foreign affairs debate in the House of Assembly last May Foreign Minister Botha threatened war against neighbouring states if they continued to "harbour guerrillas", he was backed up in his stand by the New Republic Party's foreign affairs spokesman Brian Page who said: "If any of our neighbours harbour enemies of this state who are committed to the overthrow of the legitimate regime, then they must accept the consequences, which will include pre-emptive strikes, hot pursuit and the rest. This is unavoidable and in our opinion does not constitute destabilisation".

In the debate on the defence vote in the same month, the Progressive Federal Party's Harry Schwartz called on the government to increase spending on military hardware to enable the army to carry out its task. He complained there was a lack of understanding in South Africa of the nature of the threat facing the country.

One month later the Chief of the SADF General Constand Viljoen, also in an interview with the *New York Times,* said South Africa was determined to deny the ANC "bases in all our neighbouring states, either through the cooperation of the states themselves, or by means of military action against their bases". It is in pursuit of this aggressive policy towards its own people and its neighbours that the South African regime has committed or masterminded murders and atrocities not only in Soweto and other Southern African townships but also in Maseru and Matola, throughout Southern Angola and northern Namibia, blockaded Lesotho, helped the attempted coup in the Seychelles and generally committed itself to the path of mayhem and destruction in the interests of maintaining white supremacy.

"We are faced with a racist, colonial, bellicose regime", Mozambique's President Samora Machel told the non-aligned summit meeting in New Delhi last March. "South Africa is the nazism of our time". He accused the Botha regime of recruiting "drug addicts, bandits, criminals and subversives" to destabilise the independent states of Africa opposed to Pretoria's policies. And those who may think these words extravagant should ponder recent reports that "the misuse of drugs, especially marijuana, is becoming more prevalent among young conscripts" (*Die Burger* June 11 and 13, 1983), as well as continual reports of assaults, rapes and murders perpetrated by the military in Namibia.

Danger of Invasion

Members of the liberation movement must face the implications of a change for the worse in South Africa's stance towards its neighbours. If an assassination attempt on an Israeli Ambassador in London could touch off the invasion of Lebanon with all its frightful consequences, what is to prevent Pretoria from following suit? It already occupies large areas of Angola without any word of protest from its western allies, indeed with their active connivance and support? Who can deter the racists from further acts of aggression including full-scale invasion which it indicates are already on its agenda?

It is to the credit of the frontline states that all without exception have insisted on the right to provide asylum for political refugees from South Africa. All reject and condemn apartheid. Many of them have only recently obtained their independence from the colonialists, and have been forced by South African aggression and destabilisation to spend millions on their armies instead of on education and production. Their governments are unable to concentrate on the proper priorities for their respective countries. The Botha regime often points the finger of scorn at the frontline states, accusing their governments of mismanaging their economies, but fails to mention the millions of rands of damage and destruction which have been inflicted on them by its own forces and those of its agents and mercenaries in the pay of the colonialists. Every government in the frontline states has been faced since independence with war or the threat of war from South Africa. Not all have been able to demonstrate an equal measure of practical support for our liberation movement, but on the other hand not one has sold out to Pretoria despite the threats and the handsome bribes on offer. Some have made huge sacrifices of blood and treasure backing the ANC and SWAPO to the hilt.

The South African racists are determined not only to preserve their "way of life" but also to remain "a bastion of western civilisation" on the African continent. But their real aims stretch beyond this. They intend spreading their influence throughout Africa south of the Sahara. They aim to be the breadbasket and power-house for this great piece of territory, to establish the "constellation of states" which they will dominate politically and economically. In this aim they seek and receive the support of the main western states, especially the USA. They offer favourable trading terms to these capitalist countries and scare them with the communist bogey.

They succeed in this ploy because of the great investments which these countries have in South Africa and Namibia and because they fit into the strategy of the NATO forces in their warmongering against the socialist countries, particularly the Soviet Union. Countries like the USA, West Germany, France and the UK say they cannot risk the strategic materials of Southern Africa falling into the hands of any but their chosen lackeys. With only the ANC in sight as a possible alternative government, they continue to fortify the present regime. This relationship will continue until such time as events overtake both the reactionary racists and their supporters like Reagan, Thatcher and all the other hypocritical leaders of the Western alliance.

What we can do

What can be done to counter the destabilising tactics of the Botha regime and its allies, to save the frontline states from racist aggression and intimidation? On the surface the racists seem in a position to exert almost unlimited military and economic pressure against their neighbours, but they have an Achilles' heel. They can never be certain of their rear. They can only contemplate invasion of neighbouring countries if everything is quiet behind them at home. The time has come to ask whether we in the liberation movement cannot do more to relieve the pressure on the frontline states.

The brave and heroic forces of Umkhonto we Sizwe have more than excelled themselves, especially in the past few years. Sasol, Koeberg, Moroka and all the many other actions have been a saga of incredible blows agaisnt the racist regime, and those to come will be even more shattering. But, as ANC President Oliver Tambo pointed out in an interview with the official Mozambican news agency AIM at the end of July, the liberation movement would be making a terrible mistake if it relied on armed force alone. He stressed:

> "In our situation we have to attach equal importance to organising the exploited workers. We operate on three fronts — the labour front and the front of mass popular actions as well as the front of armed actions".

The workers in highly industrialised South Africa were the most powerful element in the struggle, he said. It was no longer possible to separate trade union issues and the fight for national liberation.

The ANC proclaimed 1983 as the Year of Unity in Action, and great strides have been made in building unity on the labour front and the front of mass popular action inside South Africa in recent months. The decision taken at the conference in Johanneburg at the beginning of August to establish the United Democratic Front on a national basis has brought together the separate strands of opposition to the proposed new constitution which had emerged in the main centres of the country. The UDF, which unites people of all national groups at grassroots level, has called on all organisations to join in the fight for a programme of minimum demands for a future South Africa free of racism and oppression. Although the UDF is not formally committed to the Freedom Charter, its formation reflects the surge of support for the principles of the Charter which is now increasingly accepted as a realisable immediate alternative to the apartheid regime.

Similar attempts have been made to build unity on the trade union front. At a meeting in Athlone, Cape Town, last April, most of the major unions and federations representing workers in the independent trade union movement decided to establish a feasibility committee to discuss the formation of a new federation. Since then other union bodies have joined the feasibility committee, opening up the prospect of creating a single body to speak in the name of over 300,000 workers. The vital role which can be played by such a federation is discussed by R. S. Nyameko in an article entitled "Workers' Militancy Demands Trade Union United Front" in this issue of *The African Communist*.

The struggle for unity in these fields is opposed not only by the government and its agents but also by a variety of divisive and ultra-left elements active amongst the oppressed who mouth false slogans about "purity" but who objectively aid the forces of oppression. Members of our liberation movement must be prepared to fight on two fronts to achieve the unity which is essential for victory. Our people should be left in no doubt that those who preach separateness, who frustrate unity in the fight against apartheid, are assisting in the implementation of the Botha regime's policy of "divide and rule". What is required to bring about a qualitative change in the situation at home is the channelling of the energy and militancy of the masses into properly directed and effective blows against the enemy's weak spots. The enemy has never been more divided and confused than at this moment, the people never more determined in their opposition to apartheid. What is demanded of us is the organisation and mobilisation of the majority of our population for decisive mass action in all three spheres indicated by President Tambo.

A pledge

President Tambo himself gave a pledge to bring this about in his address to the fourth congress of the Frelimo Party in Maputo last April. He said:

> "Our bases are in South Africa itself, our bases are among the people of our country, in the cities, in the mountains, near to Koeberg nuclear power station in the Cape, a thousand miles from any border, near to the SASOL petrol tanks in the heart of the country, and, yes, right in Pretoria itself, close to the Voortrekkerhoogte military headquarters, which we have successfully shelled. The regime cannot find these bases. Therefore it invents mythical bases in neighbouring territories. For it is easier to massacre refugees in their beds or to send bandits to murder teachers and health workers in Juham than it is to stop the revolutionary process inside South Africa itself.
>
> "This is why we have war in Southern Africa, and why we will never have peace in our zone as long as apartheid exists. And this is the greatest pledge we can make to the people of Mozambique, as represented here at this Congress: We will spare no effort to increase our blows against the apartheid system, to unite the broadest sections of the South African people in concerted action against it, and to destroy once and for all the most direct and pressing source of oppression and war in our zone".

We are all bound by this pledge and must act to fulfil it. We will continue to receive support from friends and allies in Africa and the rest of the world, but it is primarily to ourselves that we must look, not only for our own liberation, but for the impetus to save the frontline states from attack and the whole of Southern Africa from the blight of war and indeed the whole of our African continent from the threat of nuclear blackmail.

FOR LAND, BREAD AND PEACE

Because the Soviet Union from time to time has a bad harvest and imports quantities of grain from other countries, Reagan and Thatcher and their ilk proclaim from the house-tops that socialism doesn't work because the Soviet government cannot feed its people. Well, the Soviet leadership frankly admits it has problems in agriculture and has adopted long-term meaures to overcome them. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that nobody in the Soviet Union goes hungry, and that whatever is produced is distributed equitably among the whole population. The variety and quality of Soviet bread, for example, is unequalled in the world. And most of the imports are of grain for feeding cattle.

In an article on Soviet agriculture published in the London *Observer* on August 30, 1981, the 'dissident' Soviet sociologist Roy Medvedev and his brother Zhores Medvedev, a Soviet-trained biologist now living in London, who could hardly be described as apologists for the Soviet Union, wrote:

> "The Soviet Union produces more than twice as much wheat as the United States, while total production of wheat, rye, rice, millet and buckwheat for human consumption is higher than that of America, Canada and Australia put together. The consumption of bread and other cereals is higher in the Soviet Union than anywhere else in the world. It is the average meat production of 132 lb. per person per year (much higher than in most countries) that creates serious problems."

The article pointed out that problems are also created by the Soviet policy of subsidising food prices. Retail prices of meat, milk and eggs had not changed since 1962 while bread costs were the same as in 1953. Pricing policies were related to production and adjustments would have to be made, said the article.

The Soviet Union is facing problems because food consumption per capita has increased enormously and the all-round standard of living is rising steadily. By contrast, the London *Times* on July 25, 1983, carried a report from its correspondent in New York under the heading: "Soup Kitchen Queues Lengthen in America". We print the report in full because we consider it significant.

> ‘At a time when American farmers are growing so much food that the Government pays them to let fields lie fallow, it is reported that many Americans are going hungry.
>
> Warehouses, grain stores and caves are filled with grain, milk, butter and cheese, and more than a third of all farmland has been taken out of production in an effort to reduce the brimming food stocks of the world's most abundant country.
>
> Yet the US conference of mayors talks of the "prevalent and insidious problem of hunger". In increasing numbers the very poor are having to queue at soup kitchens and what are called hunger centres.
>
> Mr. Leon Panetta, chairman of the House agriculture sub-committee on nutrition, says the use of soup kitchens has increased dramatically in the past two years, four and five-fold in some areas.
>
> The spectacle of hungry Americans looking for food at distribution centres recalls an investigation by doctors in 1967 which revealed widespread malnutrition in the United States. The food stamps programme which resulted from that inquiry, effectively reduced hunger but then the Reagan Administration set out to tackle what it saw as abuse of the welfare programme.
>
> Government spending on food assistance was cut from $16b in 1981 to $15.4b last year, although it is expected to go up next year.
>
> The distribution of free cheese has been curtailed by the Government because it is felt that hand-outs are hitting the commercial market.
>
> Until last March the state was giving 26,000 tons of cheese a month to the needy but that has now been roughly halved. The Government has 391,000 tons of surplus cheese in store and 211,000 tons of surplus butter.
>
> Anti-poverty organisation say that cuts in food stamps and distribution are responsible for the soup kitchen queues. Thirty two million of the population of 233 million are graded as below the poverty line but the mayors say soup kitchens are not keeping pace with the hungry.
>
> A Bill to increase the distribution of surplus food has been approved by the House of Representatives in spite of opposition by the Reagan Administration.’

Reagan and Thatcher claim (falsely) that the Soviet Union cannot feed its people. But what can one say about capitalist America which *has* the ability to feed its people but refuses to do so because there is no profit in it?

The Marxist Analysis

Marx and Engels analysed this phenomenon in the *Communist Manifesto* which they published in 1848. They wrote:

> "Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the

> nether world whom he has called up by his spells. . . It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity — the epidemic of over-production. . . The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productice forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones".

Who said Marx was out of date? Those words were true of the crisis of 1848 and are equally true of the 1983 crisis (euphemistically called a recession). The capitalism which produces the goods cannot deliver them. And on all sides we see the bourgeoisie of today attempting the same false solutions as in 1848 — Britain being de-industrialised by Thatcherist monetarism, the United States sending its forces to "protect its interests" in the Middle East and Central America. The great depression which started with the Wall Street crash in the United States in 1929 was not solved by Roosevelt's New Deal but by the second world war, which stimulated production with a guaranteed outlet and absorbed the vast army of the unemployed in the military machine and the armaments factories. Today the bourgeoisie is seeking the same militarist solution — hence the frantic drive by the US military-industrial establishment to create the atmosphere of panic and war which is conducive to their interests.

The danger is, that in this age of nuclear weapons, the solution sought by the bourgeoisie is likely to be the final one, leading to the destruction of civilisation as we know it and the possible obliteration of all human life from our planet. The fight for peace, which is at the same time a fight for social justice, is the most urgent task facing all humanity. The warmongers of capitalism must be halted in their tracks. The fruits of the earth and of man's labour must be made available to all the world's people. The exploitation and killing of man by man must be ended once and for all by the final elimination of the profit motive which is the source of the evil.

U.S. MARX CENTENARY CONFERENCE

A conference to commemorate the centenary of the death of Karl Marx was held in New York on March 19, 20 and 26 under the auspices of *Political Affairs,* the theoretical journal of the Communist Party of the United States. Distinguished representatives of the main currents of the revolutionary movement of our time were invited to deliver papers to the conference, among them Gus Hall, general secretary of the CPUSA and editor of *Political Affairs;* Timur Timofeev, director of the Institute of the World Working-Class Movement of the USSR Academy of Sciences; Hans-Joachim Radde, lecturer at the Institute of the World Working-Class Movement of the German Democratic Republic; Dr James Jackson, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the United States; and Moses Mabhida, general secretary of the South African Communist Party.

The Reagan Administration did everything in its power to disrupt the proceedings of the conference, which was planned to take place on March 19 and 20. Hans-Joachim Radde and a member of the Soviet delegation were denied visas to attend the conference, and the issue of a visa to Moses Mabhida was delayed so that by the time he was able to reach New York the conference was already over. In an unprecedented and heart-warming demonstration of solidarity, the conference was reconvened on March 26 and hundreds of delegates travelled from all over the United States to hear Moses Mabhida's address, which was received with acclamation.

Introducing discussion on the paper, Lou Diskin, secretary of the education department of the CPUSA, said:

> ‘Comrade Mabhida, in his paper, called himself "an heir to the legacy of Marxism-Leninism". Listening to his creative and crystal-clear presentation, I would say he is a most worthy heir. Both his presence and his paper add a large and significant political dimension to the *Political Affairs* symposium on the teachings of Karl Marx...
>
> For underdeveloped Africa, socialist orientation is not an easy road, as Comrade Mabhida has illustrated, but the only correct one. Already about a dozen African states (the largest number on any continent) follow this path, embracing 25 per cent of the population and 30 per cent of the territory of the continent. The tremendous awakening of the peoples, the leap in the appeal of Marxist-Leninist ideas, the significant economic, social and political advancements in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, the Republic of Congo, Algeria and other African states dramatically illustrate that creative scientific socialism has a winning future on African soil.

In the immediate period, nothing would permit socialism in Africa to take a greater leap forward than the destruction of the fascist apartheid regime in South Africa. Racism arose with the profit system of capitalism and the ending of capitalism and the building of socialism will create all the favourable conditions for ending this monstrosity once and for all. The historical experience of the multinational, multiracial Soviet Union has given the world an example, a surety: if the correct Marxist-Leninist road is followed, this inhuman ideology and practice will disappear from the face of the earth.

Yet until that happy hour, Marxism demands day-to-day, hour-to-hour unrelenting struggle against every form, expression and act of racism. As Marx and Lenin regularly stressed — without this day-to-day struggle, the workers will not be ready for "the decisive hour". This means, among other tasks, that Marxists must strive with all their might to rally and unite all workers, all democrats, all decent people to reverse the Reagan Administration's open racist embrace of this vile South African bastion of fascism. This so-called "realistic strategy", or as Under Secretary of State for African Affairs Crocker calls it, "shared interests," are but phony euphemisms for an evil racist alliance against the interests of the working peoples of South Africa and the United States.

South Africa must be quarantined and the fight for mandatory sanctions in all fields of life against South Africa must proceed deeper and broader than ever before.

The road of revolutionary struggle is arduous and difficult for any people. But for the working people of South Africa, for our embattled Communist comrades in this tortured land, the battle has been and is especially bitter. The number of jailed, tortured and murdered is phenomenal. And there is still no end.

This afternoon we lower our own fighting Marxist-Leninist banner to honour their heroism, their precious memory. For our martyred South African comrades — Communist and non-Communist — we repeat with Marx his passionate sentiments about the Communards of Paris: they are "forever enshrined in the great heart of the working class." As for their torturers and murderers, we also cry out with Marx that "history has already nailed (them) to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of their priests will not avail to redeem them.'

After the conference Moses Mabhida travelled to other cities in the United States to address public meetings under the auspices of the CPUSA.

MARX BELONGS TO EVERYONE

By MOSES MABHIDA
General Secretary of the South African Communist Party

We in Africa are repeatedly told that Marxism is an 'imported' ideology, alien to our traditions and life-styles. These accusations naturally come from defenders of private ownership, production for profit, colonialism and the exploitation of the many by the few. Such critics of Marxism confine their attacks to the theory and practice of scientific socialism while shamelessly turning a blind eye on the ravages inflicted by agents of imperialism, settlers, missionaries, traders and officials who imposed their rapacious system by force and fraud on millions of peasants in Africa, Asia, America, Australia and Oceania.

We dismiss with contempt the charge that Communists preach and practise a foreign system of ideas, either in Africa or any other continent.

In truth, Marxism-Leninism, Scientific Socialism and Communism are different names for an identical body of knowledge that provides the only satisfactory explanation yet produced of social change, the transition from one social formation to another, the conditions that bring about each kind of transition, and the basic laws of social development.

Because of its universality, Marxism belongs to all peoples in no less a degree than the revolutions in science and technology that preceded and accompanied the industrial revolution of the 18th century.

The political consequences of the related structural changes were manifested in the American Revolution of 1776, the French Revolution of 1789 and the Great October Revolution of 1917.

The first of these great political upheavals established the legitimacy of armed struggle by colonised peoples for the right of self-determination and independence from foreign rule. The Declaration of Independence of 4th July 1776 is the common property of all humanity. So is the French Revolution which brought about a transfer of power from a semi-feudal aristocracy to the rising class of capitalists; the owners of banks, factories and joint-stock trading companies.

The third of these great political revolutions opened the way to the creation of a classless socialist society based on public ownership, a planned economy, equality of rights and treatment for all citizens without distinction of race, creed or sex, and fraternal solidarity through equal opportunities for development between persons of different nationalities and ethnic communities.

The Soviet Union's socialist community, as yet only in the first phase of growth towards a fully fledged Communist society, embodies the visions and hopes of enlightened people in all countries and at all times.

Karl Marx was as much a product of the American and French Revolutions as my generation of Africans is an inheritor of the Russian Revolution. He and his life-long associate Frederick Engels contributed the earliest class analysis of the bourgeois revolutions, wrote the Communist Manifesto of 1848, and laid the theoretical foundations of the proletarian revolution.

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, universally known as Lenin, the founder of Bolshevism and of the first socialist state, was a constant and diligent student of Marx and Engels. He carefully examined and absorbed the meaning of every line of their enormous literary output, applied their propositions to the imperialist stage of capitalism, the tactics and strategy of revolution and the construction of a socialist society.

Marx, born in 1818, died at the age of 65 in 1883, one hundred years ago. We have assembled here to pay homage and express our appreciation of a great genius whose unremitting study of the dynamics of the capitalist system of production revealed the secrets of its triumphs, crimes and downfall.

Lenin was born in 1870. He bridged the gap between Marx and Engels, the first scientific socialists, and the October Revolution which made possible the realisation of their aspirations for a new type of civilisation, one that would enable children, women and men to discover and develop their talents without discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, religion or nationality.

Marx, Engels and Lenin shared the promise that the world is one; all things have a common origin and are interrelated; and hence it is possible to develop a universal body of scientifically established propositions valid for the entire human race. For this reason I claim to be an heir to the legacy of Marxism-Leninism as much as any German, Russian, or Chinese. Marx belongs to us all.

Marx's contribution

Marx and Engels were distinguished scholars as well as active revolutionaries. they received a classical education, common to members of the affluent middle class, studied Hegelian philosophy and made themselves conversant with the main political and social trends of their times.

In Lenin's words, Marx was a genius who developed and synthesised the three major ideological currents of the 19th century: German classical philosophy, English political economy and French revolutionary socialism.

His overriding search was for a social formation that would enable people to realise their dream of achieving liberty with justice and equality. Unlike the French liberals whose doctrines dominated the intellectual climate of his age, he rejected the notion that such rights and claims could be achieved in a system characterised by private ownership, class divisions, exploitation of workers, and the sacrifice of the common good to individual profit making.

Only a planned socialist economy could emancipate the people from the fetters of poverty, ignorance, disease, unemployment and exploitation. His aim was to establish a science of society that would lay a solid foundation of principles and concepts for the socialist movement.

Sickness and death prevented him from completing his assignment but he left a series of blueprints on the theory of knowledge, social change, history, religion and above all capitalism. That indeed was his main task — to dissect and lay bare the laws of capitalist production, its polarisation of poverty and wealth, the causes of class conflict and reasons for social revolution.

Forward-looking Africans, intellectuals, workers and peasants throughout the Continent, are hungry for this store of scientific information about their world and how to change it. Like many others, I too turned to Marxism-Leninism for the theory and practice of revolutionary social change.

My Road to Marxism

A good way of assessing the impact of Marxism on poor nations and their countries — usually called developing, underdeveloped or even undeveloped — is to examine its influence on individuals. Forgive me for making myself the subject of a case study; after all, I ought to know myself better than anyone else!

Capitalist crisis and imperialist war were conspicuous in my social environment during my formative years and certainly influenced my journey to Marxism.

I was six years old when the great depression of the Hungry Thirties hit South Africa and 19 years when I joined the Communist Party in December 1942 at a highly critical stage in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet peoples against the Nazi invaders.

At that time the Party was trying to organise a popular front against fascist groups in South Africa and for defence of the Soviet Union in its desperate struggle for peace.

I served my apprenticeship in the Party and trade union movement during these stormy years. In study circles and by reading Marxist classics I gained an insight into the nature of capitalist exploitation, the relations between it and national oppression and the reasons for race discrimination. My most important advance came from acceptance of the alliance between the Party and the African National Congress, between social revolution and national liberation, between socialism and majority rule.

Like other Party members I grappled with the concepts of historical materialism, dialectics, the labour theory of value, the origin and nature of socio-economic classes, the laws regulating the transitions from one kind of social formation to another, the principles of socialism and its history in the Soviet Union. This material was of enormous benefit to young African Marxists; it gave them a historical perspective from which to evaluate the quality of traditional African society and the damage inflicted on it by the agents of colonialism. Africans were able to see themselves as the victims of a great historical process of conquest, dispossession and exploitation, and to acquire understanding of the tasks to be undertaken in the struggle for liberation and social justice.

None of this newly acquired knowledge came easily. My parents were poor, of peasant stock but deprived of ancestral lands by the invading sugar barons who effectively controlled Natal. My mother, a devout Christian, died when I was five years old, leaving seven children to be brought up by my father, a farm labourer and semi-skilled urbanised wage worker. He did his best to educate us but could provide the means for only four or five years of schooling. I managed to finish the primary school and then left school to work as an unskilled labourer at a variety of jobs.

Marx on Primitive Accumulation

My experience corresponded closely to lessons I learned from a study of the founders of scientific socialism. Allow me to dwell for a few minutes on the relevance of Marxist writings to the development of capitalism in South Africa. Marx's account of 'primitive accumulation', for instance, could be matched by the history of the Zulu, to which ethnic community I belong. In Natal, as in other provinces, one might observe the effects of expropriation of African land by white settlers and their governments who herded us into 'reserves' (nowadays called Bantustans or officially Homelands), forced us through taxes and recruiting agents to leave our villages for the labour market and work as migrants under contract for less than subsistence wages.

I cannot think of a more striking or accurate description of this process than Marx' brilliant generalisation in the first Volume of Capital, Part 8, Chapter 26:

> "In the history of primitive accumulation, all revolutions are epoch-making that act as levers for the capitalist class in course of formation; but above all, those moments when great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence, and hurled as free 'unattached' proletarians on the labour-market. The expropriation of the agriculatural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process".

My father and his father were victims of this process in Natal after the defeat of the Zulu Empire at the hands of British regular troops in 1879. Zulu regiments, known as Impi, fought bravely with spears and clubs against troops armed with machine guns and long rifles, inflicting a notable defeat on the British in the famous battle at Isandlwana, but succumbed to the enemy's superior fire-power. That battle, however, earned them a mention in Frederick Engel's book on *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State,* first published in 1884.

In a chapter on the Iroquois, his model of what he called 'primitive communism' Engels claimed that the Zulus achieved what no European army could have done.

> "Armed only with lances and spears, without any fire-arms, they advanced under a hail of bullets from breechloaders up to the bayonets of the English infantry — and threw them into confusion more than once, yes, even forced

> them to retreat in spite of immense disparity of weapons, and in spite of the fact that they have no military service and don't know anything about drill".

Marx on Colonial Expansion through Conquest

In passages such as this Africans recognise themselves as victims of colonial conquest and imperialist greed. We learn that the development of the big capitalist powers takes place by means of the under-development of the poor peasant countries, that industrialised countries obtain the capital for industrialisation from the extraction of precious metals and tropical products in the colonies. Marx was one of the first scholars to establish links between colonial plunder and the industrial revolution. In Capital, Vol. I, Chapter 31 on the 'Genesis of the industrial capitalist', he spelled out the connection:

> "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production...The different moments of primitive accumulation distribute themselves now, more or less in chronological order, particularly over Spain, Portugal, Holland, France and England...These methods depend in part on brute force, e.g. the colonial system".

Citing the conclusions of various historians on the 'Christian colonial system', Marx noted that the history of the colonial administration of Holland — and Holland was the head capitalistic nation of the 17th century — "is one of the most extraordinary relations of treachery, bribery, massacre and meanness".

The Dutch East India Company, as is well known, imposed colonialism on South Africa in 1652 when it planted a settlement of Company servants and hangers-on at the Cape at the southernmost extremity of the Continent. The Company imported slaves from Africa and the East Indies, seized the land of the indigenous inhabitants, and set off a reign of wars, conquest and expropriation against the independent African states in the interior.

The descendants of the early settlers from Europe cling to the practice of an outmoded colonial system, involving gross racial segregation, discrimination and denial of human rights. It is against this system, known everywhere as apartheid, that the oppressed people have raised the banner of revolt in an armed struggle for independence from colonial rule and the right to self-determination.

At the present time more than 16 million Africans are confined by law to reservations covering only 13 per cent of the country's surface area. The reserves or Bantustans have been divided into 10 separate states with the intention of frustrating the African aim of uniting all national groups into a single people under a democratic constitution that will guarantee equality of rights and opportunities to all.

Loss of land and deprivation of rights are not peculiar to the colonised peoples of Africa. Did not the Indians of America, both North and South, suffer the same fate at the hands of foreign invaders? Are the Australian 'Black-fellows' not victims of the same historical process? Colonialism was a world-wide phenomenon; its consequences continue to plague the liberated colonies. But where else can we find a true explanation of our problems and solution than in the writings of Marx and those who apply his method of analysis and basic concepts?

Studying the works of Marx we learnt that racism was not just an emotional aberration of white immigrants, it has its roots in the Capitalist and imperialist system of exploitation. The events in many parts of post-independent Africa have shown that black capitalists can be just as efficient at exploiting their people as their white neo-colonial partners.

The Crisis of Capitalism

I referred earlier to the great depression of the Hungry Thirties. In my country, as elsewhere, the depression gave rise to great unemployment, wage cuts and severe reductions in living standards of working people. The workers in South African industrial centres fought back under the leadership of the Party, only to be met with bullets and batons, deportations and detentions. One of our leaders, Johannes Nkosi, the Party branch secretary in Durban, was hacked to death at a mass rally held on 16 December 1930 in protest against wage cuts and pass laws.

We remember our martyred dead both to honour their memories and to remind ourselves that the present sufferings of Black workers in South Africa are due to the continuation of the violence perpetrated against them by the ruling class.

Once again capitalism is in the stranglehold of economic depression, one that is even more prolonged and severe than its predeccessor of 50 years ago. South Africa, as part of the Capitalist World, is also facing unprecedented economic difficulties, but, as usual the main burden is being carried by the oppressed black masses.

Capitalism is on the verge of economic collapse. As in the 1930s powerful forces are at work looking for a way out through world war, even at the risk of nuclear annihilation. We have no reason to suppose that only a totalitarian state of the Nazi type can mobilise a population for such a war. It can be done also by a so-called democracy with absolute control over the mass media and a huge secret service such as the FBI and CIA constitute.

Secondly, for the sake of self-preservation and out of a sense of moral responsibility, the people who want peace must intensify their efforts to stop the arms race, force government to scale down the enormous stocks of weapons, and renounce war as a means of settling international disputes.

Ideological attacks on the Socialist world and the Soviet Union are a cover for imperialist greed, the search for markets, raw materials and profits. The movement for peace is necessary in our own interests and to protect socialism against those who wish to destroy it. Capitalist governments and their academic spokesmen may prefer to ignore or deride Marxism as they did a century ago. They cannot however ignore the socialist world. Its existence and growth are a practical demonstration of the validity of Marxist-Leninist theory. I shall therefore say something about the significance of the 1917 Revolution.

The Marxist word became flesh in the October Revolution. People who call themselves Marxists, non-Marxists, Trotskyists, Maoists or Euro-Communists spend more time in abusing the Soviet Union than in attacking their alleged opponent the capitalist system. That fratricidal war began during the Revolution when Mensheviks, Revisionists and the entire tribe of Social-Democrats repudiated the Bolsheviks in the name of individual liberty and human rights.

The only comment I wish to make is that socialists who reject the achievements of socialism in action can hardly expect to persuade people that their version of the new world will be better.

In global terms the Soviet Union has changed the balance of forces in favour of peace, the colonised, dispossessed and exploited. There is a direct connection between its emergence as a world power and the process of decolonisation that set in after the October Revolution and with renewed vigour after the defeat of Fascism in the Second World War.

Liberation would have come to colonised people through their own efforts in the natural course of historical development; but it came the sooner and more readily because of the stand taken by the Soviet Union against foreign domination, the colonial system and national oppression.

This is an area in which Lenin's influence was particularly important. He condemned, long before the October Revolution, all forms of colonial domination, identified it as a species of national oppression, and urged that the colonised, however poor and underdeveloped, had the same legitimate claim to self-determination and secession as any national minority in Europe.

The policy of the Soviet Union towards contemporary liberation movements is firmly rooted in principles formulated in conferences of the Second International during the first decade of this century and in Marx's famous formula: "The victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie is at the same time the signal for liberation for all oppressed nations".

The National Question

The Soviet Union is a multi-racial federation which survived the most severe test imaginable of an unparalleled armed invasion that resulted in the death of 20 million Soviet citizens and the destruction of social resources on an appalling scale.

The Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, meeting in March 1921, acknowledged that 'The elimination of actual national inequality is a lengthy process involving a stubborn and persistent struggle against all survivals of national oppression and colonial slavery'. The border regions, notably Turkestan, were in the position of colonies supplying raw materials for manufacture at the centre. This relationship was the basic cause of economic and national inequality.

It was the task of the Party 'to help the toiling masses of the non-Great Russian peoples to catch up with Central Russia, which is ahead of them'. Measures required for this purpose were specified and implemented in course of time. The Twelfth Congress resolved in April 1923 that though the equality of legal status of nations was a great achievement, it did not in itself solve the national problem of inherited inequalities. This could be eliminated 'only if real and prolonged assistance is given by the Russian proletariat to the backward people of the Union in the sphere of economic and cultural advancement'.

All forms of inequality between nationalities in the Soviet Union have been eliminated in accordance with these and subsequent decisions. Already in 1922, when the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics was established the claim could be made with justification that the integration of the national republics into the Union represented the concluding stage in the formation of a single multi-national State on the basis of equality and voluntary consent. In the succeeding sixty years, the equality has become acutal and manifest.

As Yuri Andropov remarked last December when celebrating the 60th anniversary of the birth of the USSR, 'History has fully borne out the theory of Marx and Lenin that the nationalities question can only be settled on a class basis. National discord and all forms of racial and national inequality and oppression receded into the past together with social antagonisms'.

Many countries in Africa are still plagued by inequalities and rivalries between ethnic communities. We can learn from Marxism-Leninism how to turn thes diversities to good account by giving each community the opportunity to develop its language and culture within a single state system adhering to the principles of 'national in form, socialist in content'.

To achieve the goal of unity in diversity, however, Africa and other developing countries will have to liberate themselves from class divisions, exploitation and national oppression. This they cannot do unless they liberate themselves from the yoke of capitalism and imperialism.

Marxism in Africa

The prospect of achieving workers' power is still some distance away in most parts of Africa. Eighty per cent and more of the population are peasants; the working class is small and concentrated in a few industrial centres and port towns; workers are not organised in political parties; and only a handful of Marxist-Leninist vanguard parties have emerged.

To these objective obstacles must be added the enormous influence of colonial institutions on the constitutions, legislatures, administrative apparatus and economies of developing countries. They have been emancipated from colonialism only in a formal sense. Political power has been transferred; many of the external features of the culture are traditional; but the content continues to be colonial-capitalist.

Parties and governments are often dominated by the middle class of educated and professional people who enrich themselves by manipulating the state apparatus and large public corporations. These have taken the place of expatriate companies of the colonial era but continue to depend on and work with foreign capital represented by governments, international finance and multi-national conglomerates. This was the combination of interests that Lenin considered to be the driving force behind imperialist expansion. It persists, in spite of the formal, constitutional withdrawal of old-fashioned colonialism; and works closely in conjunction with an expanding indigenous bourgeoisie.

The emergence of a bourgeois class of collaborators sharpens the conflict of interests within the nation and accentuates the contradictions between workers, peasants and capitalists. Small but important groups of intellectuals have turned to Marxism for a theoretical understanding of class formation and the appropriate forms of struggle in defence of propertyless urban workers and poor peasants.

Twelve Marxist-Leninist Parties have taken shape in different countries of Africa. A minority of these are in power, constituting islands of socialism in an underdeveloped and technologically backward continent. But they are Marxist-Leninist in outlook and organisation; determined to solve the main problem of bringing about the transition from capitalism to socialism.

Marxism has come to stay in Africa. Its immediate future depends on the determination of the vanguard parties and scattered groups of intellectuals, workers and peasants throughout the continent who recognise that socialism alone provides a satisfactory and lasting solution to the continent's problems of ignorance, illiteracy, disease, poverty, technological backwardness and imperialist exploitation.

For us in Africa the writings of that great genius who died 100 years ago live on. Marx has a relevance which is not only theoretical; he has given us the tools without which we will not be able to construct a life of peace, freedom and socialism.

(See Editorial Notes — 'US Marx Centenary Conference'.)

WORKERS' MILITANCY DEMANDS TRADE UNION UNITED FRONT

By R.S. Nyameko

The past year continued the African workers' upsurge in trade union growth and strike action — both founded on the urgent needs of our workers, our people and our entire movement for liberation of our country.

All racist regimes in South Africa, irrespective of political complexion, and acting on behalf of the employing class, have sought to crush attempts by African workers to organise trade unions of their own choosing by using measures of repression, the shooting of strikers, detention, imprisonment, torture, murder, banning and exile of trade union leaders and militant workers.

All such measures of repression, coercion and intimidation failed to achieve their aim because of the determination of the African working class to defend itself against attacks by the racist regimes. We pay tribute to the working class leaders and organisers, many of whom were members of the Communist Party, for their dedicated, heroic struggles in the past 65 years. The movement suffered severe setbacks by reason of the bannings and removal of at least 150 dedicated and experienced trade union leaders under the Suppression of Communism Act.

We commend the courageous and persistent efforts of workers and organisers to fill this gap by producing new leaders and forming new unions.

The wave of strikes from 1973, the display of workers' power destroyed the facade of industrial peace. The regime's introduction of works councils and liaison committees was nullified. The workers declared clearly that these councils and committees cannot take the place of trade unions.

The unabated strikes, followed by the Soweto uprising of 1976, forced the regime to appoint the Wiehahn Commission.

The subsequent adoption of the Labour Relations Act of August 1981 reflects the significant advance made by the working class and liberation movement. For the first time in our country's history the racist regime has been forced to reverse a policy that has been in existence since the beginning of the century.

This policy was to exclude African workers from the collective bargaining system and discriminate against them in the labour market.

Race and class domination did not begin with apartheid. What the apartheid regime did was to intensify the basic components of the exploitative system and adjust it to changing economic conditions.

Monopoly capitalism is more responsive to changing conditions than is racist apartheid. The primary concern of capitalism is to maximise profits and for this purpose it wants to make the most economic and profitable use of labour resources. The Black workers demonstrated a determination and capacity to organise, and the international opposition to apartheid mobilised by our liberation movement became a significant factor in forcing capital to accept the inevitability of change in the labour market.

Every advance of our struggle towards liberation gives rise to manoeuvres and manipulations by the ruling class to weaken the struggle through reformism and class collaboration, both of which are encouraged by such institutions as trade union registration, industrial council participation, closed shop agreements and stop orders — all contained in the Labour Relations Act. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 1983 (President's Council) ensures ultimate control by the white ruling party, with a new preamble which affirms commitment to freedom of worship, *anti-communism* and *private enterprise*.

We are confident that reformist tactics will be of no avail against a united, politically-conscious and militant working class which clearly understands its leading role in the struggle against class and race exploitation. The controls introduced to hamper the efforts of trade unions, both registered and unregistered, will fail to stop their progress towards emancipation.

Our trade union movement has sufficient experience to overcome the obstacles raised by such devices as registration, conciliation boards and industrial councils. These devices should not be allowed to constitute an impediment to unity on the basis of sound trade union policies and the best interests of the working class.

What the Figures Show

A glance at the recorded strikes (not all strikes are recorded) shows the increased upsurge in class consciousness.

In 1973 there were 370 strikes involving 98,000 workers. In 1974 there were 101 strikes involving more than 22,000 workers which caused the loss of 67,000 mandays. In 1979 there were 36 reported strikes in South Africa involving 21,000 workers.

By the end of August 1980 the number of reported strikes was 61 involving about 95,000 workers.

The National Manpower Commission Report tabled in Parliament on 25th May, 1982, stated that there were 342 strikes in 1981, nearly all of them illegal, involving nearly 93,000 workers, 93 per cent of them black. The worst post-war year was 1973, when there were 370 strikes involving 98,000 workers.

The Eastern Cape and the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area each accounted for more than 27 per cent of the strikes. Both areas are experiencing rapid unionisation of blacks, particularly in the metals and motor manufacturing industries. Forty-eight per cent of the strikes were about wages.

Despite the growing repression of 1981-1982, the regime has not had its own way. In 1982 more strikes took place according to the Department of Manpower figures.

The number of workers taking part in strikes, the number of mandays lost through them and the average length of strikes were all greater than in 1981.

The record-breaking strike figures reveal that there were 394 strikes last year, compared to 342 in 1981. A total of 141,570 workers (none of them white) took part in these strikes — an increase of around 50,000 over 1981. More than 365,339 working days were lost through strikes and work stoppages — a sharp increase over 1981's figure of 226,000. This means that on average around 1,000 workers were on strike each calendar day last year, most of them Africans.

The average length of strikes and stoppages, regarded by labour experts as a key indicator of strike activity, also increased slightly. While 2.44 man days were lost per striker in 1981, last year's figure was 2,58. Strikes by coloured and Asian workers accounted for just one sixth of lost time. (1)

These strikes do not include the Day of Mourning called by the Food and Canning Workers' Union and the AFCWU (2) for Thursday 11th February to commemorate Neil Aggett's death. Despite short notice, this political strike was supported by FOSATU, SAAWU, CUSA, MACWUSA, GWU, GAWU and MWASA. (3) The workers were asked to wear black arm bands and stop work between 11.30 and 12 noon.

It was estimated that about 100,000 workers responded to the call in all the main industrial centres and in the fishing hamlets and small towns of the Cape Western Province.

Here are a few extracts of an assessment of this stoppage by branches of the AFCWU and FCWU from Cape Town to East London in the Cape Province, from Hout Bay to St. Helena Bay on the West Coast, at Industria, Isando and East Rand and Durban. (4)

> "We saw the half-hour work-stoppage both as a commemoration of the death of our comrade and a warning to the authorities who are conducting their vendetta againt the trade union movement. . .The workers responded to the call with great conviction and determination."
>
> "At one factory, in a country town where workers are 'supposed to know their place,' the workers were ready to ban all overtime work until the employers finally backed down and agreed to pay for the half-hour stoppage.
>
> "All the workers participated, even those that aren't usually at union meetings. The committees and workers at each factory decided themselves how to use the half-hour, but in most cases there were tributes to Neil Aggett, some kind of a service, and singing. . .Some lorries stopped on the road at 11.30."
>
> "The response of the progressive trade unions was that this time the State had gone 'too far'."
>
> "In Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, unions described the stoppage as a 'complete success'."
>
> "In East London about 6,500 workers downed tools for varying periods."
>
> "In PWV area — Pretoria, the West Rand, the Vaal area and Sasolburg — more than 30,000 workers participated in the stoppage."
>
> "The protest was well supported by organised workers in Maritzburg. . .An impressive 90% of the workers to whom the call for a stoppage was directed responded in a disciplined way to an issue of far-reaching significance."
>
> "Despite considerable management intimidation there was a good response to the call for a stoppage in the Durban, Hammarsdale, Tongaat, Estcourt, Pinetown, Empangeni and Jacobs, Mooi River, Umbongintwini, Rossburgh areas."

The events of February 11 are of great significance in the history of labour organisation in our country. Organised labour in their respective unions stood together and put aside their differences over this issue. This unity of the trade union movement was a fitting tribute to Neil Aggett. It could also be the basis of further unity and cooperation of a more permanent kind in the future.

TUCSA Treachery

The events of February 11th also exposed the treacherous behaviour of TUCSA (Trade Union Council of SA). In the *Citizen* of Monday 15th February 1982, J.A. Grobbelaar, General Secretary of TUCSA said:

> "TUCSA unhesitatingly distanced itself from any call for industrial action in connection with this specific tragic event. TUCSA did not believe in supporting negative actions which did not find favour with the workforce in general and which would only have the effect of discrediting all sections and elements of the labour force."

His statement was calculated to please the government. The 30-minute stoppage of work was the workers' expression of anger at the murder of a trade union leader. By 'distancing' itself TUCSA exposed its betrayal of trade union and working class solidarity. It revealed itself as the protector of white privilege.

The murder of Neil Aggett evoked the widest protest. The protesters included academics, scholars, students, liberals, national liberation forces and workers. Their indignation was echoed throughout the country and the world. Here was a medical man who without hope of material reward gave his time and services to the workers' cause, a medical man who broadened his professional feeling to the working class to include underpaid and victimised wage earners.

In this struggle we saw who is friend and who is foe.

The Commercial and Allied Workers' Union (CAWU) and the National Union of Distributive Workers (NUDW) both disaffiliated from TUCSA in protest against its stand. These unions are to be commended for the lead they have given to other unions affiliated to TUCSA.

Workers' militancy was also displayed in the strikes and demonstrations which eventually forced the government to withdraw its contentious draft Pension Bill. In terms of the Bill, employees would no longer be able to withdraw their pension benefits when leaving one job for another, only one third of the total pension could be taken out as a lump sum on retirement, and there were other restrictions which led the African workers to believe they were being robbed of the fruits of their labour, that money due to them would never in fact be paid over. In addition the African workers were fed up because at no stage had they or their unions been consulted over the terms of the Bill.

By South African standards it is extraordinary that the regime should have scrapped a proposed Bill in the face of pressure from the African workers. Recent experiences have demonstrated that Afrian trade unions have arrived and are here to stay. Hundreds of agreements have already been negotiated between unions and management, opening the way to collective bargaining and substantial benefits for the workers. Though recognition agreements vary considerably in form and content, they have common features. The emphasis is on building up and consolidating support, factory by factory. The union skills of factory representatives are being developed. The scope of union activity is also being broadened. Because loss of a job also means loss of residence rights for African workers in urban areas, the unions have demanded a say in the formulation of disciplinary, grievance and retrenchment procedures.

Yet in this field too TUCSA has 'distanced' itself from the workers and condemned the African workers' strikes and protests against the draft Pension Bill. TUCSA leaders have appealed to employers not to sign recognition agreements with African unions, to insist on the upholding of the traditional industrial council system and the closed shop, both of which preserve the privileges of the minority white workers. Anna Scheepers, the TUCSA President, warned businessmen "that they would reap 'bitter fruits' if they sowed further seeds of dissension in the life-and-death struggle between *traditional* (i.e. white dominated) unions and the new, more militant black union movement." (5)

The progressive black trade unions have exposed the myth spread by TUCSA and the racist regime that the black workers now enjoy "freedom of association" and that the wage gap between black and white workers has narrowed.

What kind of "freedom of association" do the workers enjoy when no fewer than 32 black trade union leaders have been detained in the last year (Thozamile Gqweta, SAAWU's president has been detained no less than nine times) — and all of them tortured by South African security police and those of the Sebe regime in the Ciskei? When trade union offices are raided and trade union officials continuously harassed? Black miners who go on strike are still given bullets instead of bigger wages.

As far as the racial wage gap is concerned, the following is a table of average monthly wages in rands:

	Mining industry	Manufacturing industry	Iron, Steel, Engineering & Metallurgical industry
African	247	316	320
Coloured	446	365	504
Asian	680	446	567
White (6)	1332	1283	1160

The black progressive trade unions therefore have a tremendous task to win true freedom of association, to step up the fight against the negative features of the Labour Relations Act, 1981, for an all-out attack on low wages, for homes, against mass removals, pass laws, influx control, for access to skilled work and for social and political rights.

During the past year many black unions have demonstrated their increasing level of political awareness. They have joined with community organisations to fight against increases in bus fares, rents, electricity charges and the general cost of living and called for the rejection of the President's Council and the new constitution and opposition to the Bantustan traitors and other collaborators.

Trade Union Unity

Steps have also been taken to build trade union unity. Following the first unity conference at Langa on August 8, 1981 (7), and building on the militancy of the workers shown over the Aggett murder and other issues, further unity conferences were held last year — in April at Wilgespruit and in July at Port Elizabeth — but the desired unity has still not been brought about.

On April 9 and 10 this year, several hundred delegates representing seven trade union groupings and over 200,000 workers — almost the entire emerging mainly black trade union movement — voted to set up a feasibility commission which has been entrusted with the task of forming a major new trade union federation.

The groupings, which agreed to work towards a new federation, were the Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu), the General Workers' Union (GWU), the African Food and Canning Workers' Union (AFCWU) and the Food and Canning Workers' Union (FCWU), the South African Allied Workers' Union (Saawu), the General and Allied Workers' Union (Gawu), the Cape Town Municipal Workers' Association and the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Ccawusa).

Union groupings which did not vote in favour of the federation were the Council of Unions of South Africa (Cusa), the Motor Assembly and

Component Workers' Union (Macwusa), the Orange-Vaal General Workers' Union and the Municipal and General Workers' Union.

Early in May CUSA and MACWUSA announced their readiness to join the feasibility commission. Later Orange-Vaal GWU also joined. The commission met on July 2, reported progress and agreed to carry on with the work of uniting the black trade union movement. The aspirations and tasks of the April conference were expressed in the following statements:

Mrs. Emma Mashinini, general secretary of Ccawusa, said they were backing the new federation "to form a united front against capital and state repression."

Mr. Jan Theron, general secretary of the AFCWU and FCWU, said the formation of a federation was wanted by the unions' members. He said: "The time is long overdue for the formation of a new federation which can speak for the workers of this country and tackle the task of properly organising workers".

Communist Party policy

Our Party's policy on trade unionism has been formulated and presented consistently for more than 60 years. We communists work for maximum working class unity on a progressive anti-capitalist and anti-racist platform; reject syndicalism or craft unions and strongly support industrial unions which embrace all workers in a particular trade or industry; reject authoritarian or bureaucratic tendencies in trade unions and stand for workers' maximum participation in the management of trade unions.

In the South African context, the Party has always urged the adoption of an open door policy which accepts membership by workers of all races without discrimination. This is the basic principle laid down in the Party Programme of 1962 which attributes racial divisions in the working class to the conditions of capitalist exploitation and competition. The Programme insists that the fundamental interests of all South African workers, like those of workers everywhere, lie in unity.

At the same time our party calls upon the black workers to oppose incorporation into white-dominated 'non-racial' trade unions.

The first step is for black workers to organise themselves into strong viable unions in order to ensure in non-racial unions that the principle of democratic majority leadership is applied.

Our party welcomes in principle the moves towards the formation of a united trade union movement. Therefore it hails the recent unity meeting in Cape Town as well as the establishment of a feasibility commission to reconcile the different approaches to trade union unity.

We call upon the various trade unions to ensure that such a Federation is radical and democratic, serving the interests of the working people.

To facilitate the goal of one Federation, it is crucial to encourage general workers' unions gradually to phase themselves out and thus form industrial unions: that is, *one union for one industry.*

To generate a climate of unity and co-ordination, regular trade union meetings and continuous dialogue are needed to achieve joint action in tackling the burning issues affecting the workers e.g. retrenchment, unemployment, mass removals, President's Council and Koornhof genocide bills.

Though we oppose registration, industrial councils and closed-shop agreements, nevertheless these should not be obstacles to trade union unity and should never be elevated to the level of principles.

At this stage, we are of the view that affiliation to international trade union centres will be a divisive factor and therefore urge non-affiliation.

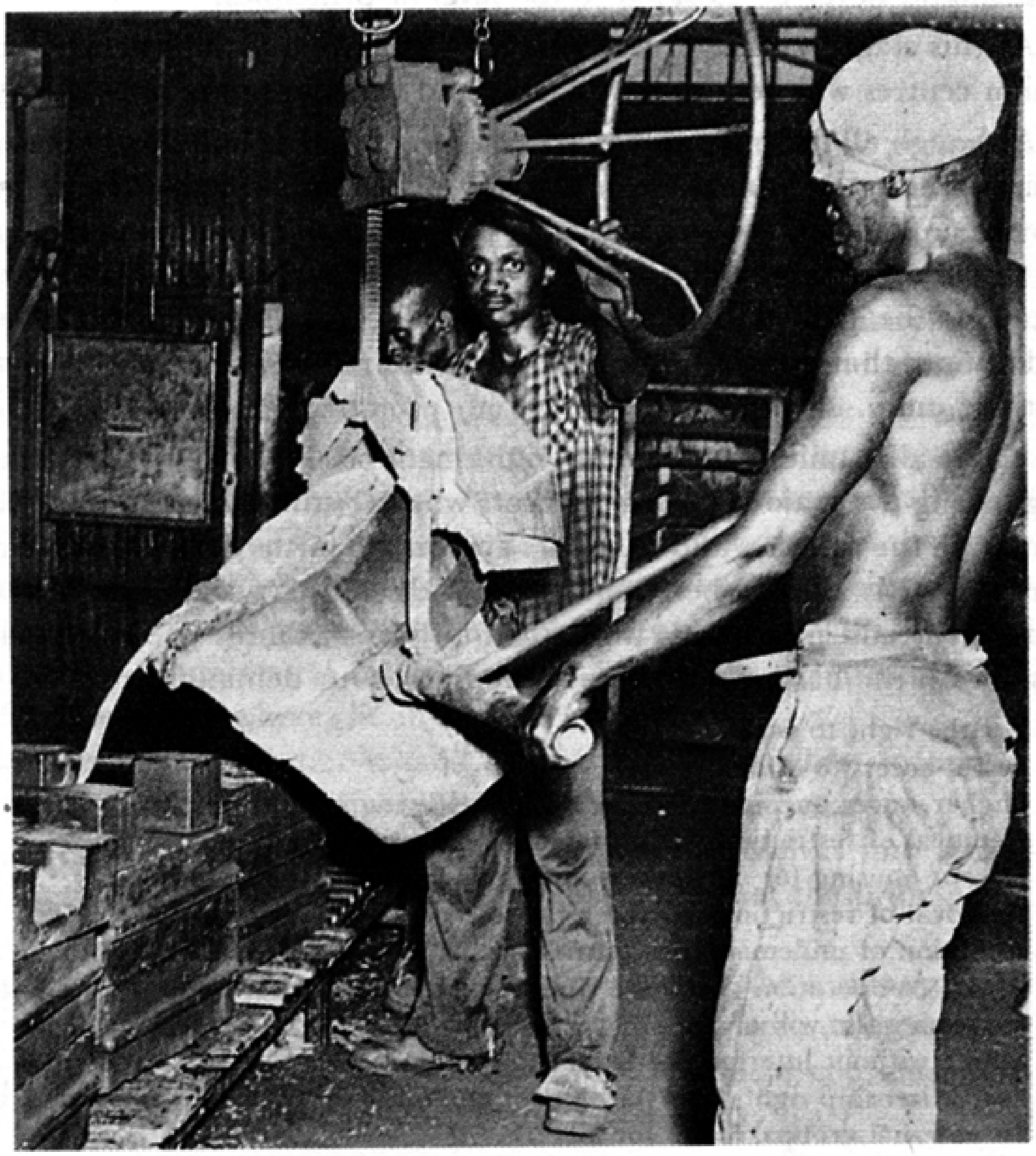
Although all these groupings are committed to the building of one trade union federation, there are still many obstacles — controversial issues, divisive influences, competition and rivalries among unions. All these must be discussed patiently in a frank and honest way. So much is at stake, so much to be gained by the formation of a single united trade union federation, that every effort must be made to remove all obstacles from the path of unity.

Above all a united trade union movement could tackle the huge task of organising the majority of our workers who are still unorganised — on the mines, in the railways and harbours and on the farms. We call on all trade union activists, members and supporters of the national liberation movement and progressive workers of all races to unite their forces in an assault on the bastions of white supremacy. Our demands are:

For the right to work.
Equal access to skilled work.
Higher wages and improved working and living conditions.
Removal of restrictions on movement and residence.
Decent housing for all workers and their families.
Removal of restrictions on the right to strike.
Abolition of undemocratic controls on trade unions and their leaders.
Close co-operation between trade unions and community organisations expressing the will of the people and their determination to manage their own affairs without interference from the racist bureaucracy.
Full citizenship rights, one parliament and one country for all South Africans of all national groups. Votes for all.

References:

(1) *Rand Daily Mail* 8.4.83.
(2) African Food and Canning Workers' Union.
(3) FOSATU — Federation of South African Trade Unions; SAAWU — South African Allied Workers' Union; CUSA — Council of Unions of South Africa; MACWUSA — Motor Assemblers and Components Workers' Union; GWU — General and Allied Workers' Union; MWASA — Media Workers' Association of South Africa.
(4) See *South African Labour Bulletin* Vol. 1,7 No. 6 April 1982 pages 6-28.
(5) *Cape Argus* 13.6.83.
(6) In addition white miners receive all kinds of fringe benefits.
(7) *The African Communist* No. 89, Second Quarter 1982 pp. 27-28.



Defend the Fatherland! Overcome underdevelopment! Build Socialism!

FRELIMO FIGHTS FOR THE FUTURE OF MOZAMBIQUE

The fourth congress of the Frelimo Party, Mozambique's Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, held in Maputo at the end of April, was an historic event, not only for the Mozambican people, but for all progressive and revolutionary forces in Southern Africa. It brought together 677 delegates from all parts of the country, 183 invited guests from various spheres of public life in Mozambique, and 145 foreign guests, representing 65 parties, liberation movements and solidarity organisations from no less than 54 different countries. The congress was conducted in a spirit of militant enthusiasm, open and uninhibited debate, and resolute determination to achieve the three objectives set out by the keynote slogans of the congress: Defend the fatherland! Overcome underdevelopment! Build socialism! Our special correspondent explains the background to and significance of the congress.

The first congress was the foundation of FRELIMO in 1962. The second congress in 1968 witnessed the decisive triumph of the revolutionary democratic line over narrow, reactionary, bourgeois and tribalist trends in the national movement. The third congress in 1977 marked the transformation of FRELIMO, the broad front for national liberation, into a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, dedicated to the building of socialism, and set the course for the many and complex social, economic and cultural transformations required for the achievement of socialism.

Since 1977 the Mozambican people have taken tremendous strides forward. The report of the Central Committee to the fourth congress, the reading of which occupied most of the first two days of the 5-day event, is full of facts and figures which demonstrate the numerous gains of the people, the advances made in a few short years. A brief survey can only skim the surface of the rich experience and the striking progress made since independence in 1975.

Economic development

The need for the state to take over numerous abandoned enterprises in the immediate post-independence period, and to intervene in many others, because of their strategic significance, or to prevent sabotage, both physical and financial, brought the state into the centre of economic life at an early stage. Since the third congress this pivotal role has been consolidated and extended, to the point where now some 85% of total production for the market is planned, and state enterprises produce 70% of total marketed production. State enterprises are dominant in the following sectors: agriculture, industry, energy, mines, transport and communications, construction, and external trade. Banking and insurance are also controlled by the state.

The significance of this is far-reaching. Private capital has lost its grip, and its role in future will be to work alongside and under control of the democratically controlled state sector. The introduction of planning, with all the faults and weaknesses inevitable in the early phase of such a complex process, has begun to involve working people in the management of the economy. To live and work in a planned and organised way has already come to be, in the words of the C.C. report, "a characteristic of Mozambicans. This is a great victory of the building of socialism in our country."

Parallel with the introduction of planned production has developed cooperative distribution. Today 20% of retail trade is carried out through democratically run cooperatives, with half a million members, and reaching 2,300,000 mostly urban consumers (nearly a fifth of the entire population). In Maputo the cooperatives have provided the organisational basis for the efficient food rationing system which goes a long way to ensuring minimum supplies reach everybody.

Socialisation of agriculture has been another key aim, to overcome the dispersion and individual limitations of peasant producers. The main achievement here has been the creation of 1350 communal villages, with 1,800,000 inhabitants. Most of these have some or all of the following services (little of which would have been possible without villagisation, and none of which they knew in colonial society): schools, health posts, water and electricity supplies, postal services, drainage. Some 460 have elected popular assemblies, 156 have people's courts, and in 515 party cells have been established.

On the other hand, state support for agricultural cooperatives has been badly neglected — as many participants in the Congress debates pointed out forcefully. From 1977 to 1982 the number of production cooperatives grew from 180 to 370, but their total number of 37,000 members is a tiny fraction of the millions who need to be drawn into a variety of forms of mutual assistance if socialisation of the countryside is to advance. The past one-sided concentration of the government on the state sector in agriculture, and neglect of the cooperative and family sectors, were recognised as mistaken, and the Congress gave a strong emphasis to the need to redress the balance, and to encourage small projects which use local resources, promote local initiative and creativity, and start to satisfy immediate needs.

Part and parcel of this trust is the new commitment to push planning down to district level, so as to involve ever wider circles of people in planning, and to take better account of local realities, skills and knowledge. Provincial and central government bureaucrats who are remote from the daily lives of rural prople, and sit in their offices shuffling papers and drawing up grandiose, often unrealistic plans, have been severely criticised in recent months, and are increasingly being pushed out to manage key enterprises, and to work more closely with people at the base.

It was on the basis of the huge political and organisational feats mentioned above and others, that tangible economic advances were registered in the four years after the third congress. In the period 1977-81, total social production grew by 11.6%, agricultural gross production by 8.8%, industrial production by 13.7%, production in transport and communications by 15.4% and in construction by 25%. Hand in hand with these advances went enormous progress in health and welfare services.

The nationalisation of the health service laid the basis for the creation of a health system at the service of the people. Since 1975 a total of 3,250 nurses and other professional health workers have been trained. By 1981 every district had at least one trained person with diagnostic and therapeutic skills. A national vaccination campaign was conducted for the first time ever, reaching virtually 96% of the population and making possible the elimination of smallpox. The infant mortality rate was reduced from 150 per 1,000 in 1975 to 80 per 1,000 in 1982.

In primary education the number of pupils rose from 672,000 (1975) to 1,330,000 (1982). In 5 years 10,200 primary school teachers were trained. Since 1975, 430,000 pupils have completed 4th class, more than in the entire period of colonial rule. The teacher/pupil ratio in primary classes fell from 1:84 in 1977 to 1:53 in 1982. In secondary education, the number of schools rose from 33 in 1975 to 121 in 1982, and the number of pupils from 23,000 to 94,400. Four literacy campaigns and 4 adult education campaigns were carried out in this period. All this has helped to reduce the illiteracy rate, which in 1974 was 93% for all those aged 7 upwards, by 20%.

Political development

What is the character of this state which plays such a central role in managing and developing the economy and providing for the well-being of the people?

Since the third congress an entire legislative apparatus has been brought into being as a major step in mobilizing the people to take control of their own destiny. The people's assemblies now exist at national level, with 11 at provincial level, 101 at district and 1,332 at locality levels. The process of establishing these bodies, and of electing the nearly 44,000 deputies involved in them, was a great schooling in democracy. A people denied democratic rights for centuries have begun to be drawn into political life, both by the assemblies themselves, and also by the formation and development of mass democratic organisations, such as that of the women (the OMM) and the youth (OJM), various socio-professional organisations (e.g. of teachers, journalists, writers etc.), and the production councils, embryonic workers' bodies, the process of whose transformation into trade unions was due to get under way a few months after the fourth congress.

Despite many weaknesses in the functioning of the people's assemblies, such as merely formal compliance with the legal obligations that compel them to function, passsivity and lack of clarity as to their role, their creation represents a great advance, and their improvement will come with consolidation, study and experience. Much the same can be said of the organs of popular justice — the 10 Provincial People's Courts, and their 34 district and 535 local level counterparts. Public criticism of weaknesses in the judicial system before and after the Congress have underlined the need to decolonise the law and its operation, and led to the closing of the Law Faculty and the appointment of a new Minister of Justice — two of several measures aimed at improving the training of lawyers, rooting the courts more deeply in the values of the Mozambican revolution and relating them more closely to the experience and expectations of the people. In all this, as in the questions of economic management, the key is Frelimo's method of involving the people in solving the problems of their daily lives.

It is this approach which justifies the Central Committee's characterisation of the state in Mozambique today as a people's democratic state. To maintain and extend this sort of power in the executive organs of the state is however a task of considerable complexity, especially since much of the executive arm of the present state, unlike the legislative and judicial arms which have been largely created since independence, has been inherited from the colonial-fascist state which it replaced. The problems in this area are legion, and they all have to be resolved in circumstances marked by a severe lack of qualified cadres in every field (the result of colonialism's denial of education) and by an unhealthy dependence in the state apparatus on the small pool of qualified cadres drawn from certain middle strata which enjoyed privileges under colonialism and which have elitist, if not bourgeois aspirations. These conflict with the class nature of the revolutionary transformations which the state must guide into being in the course of socialist construction.

Three of the problems that arise in this area are: corruption, over-centralisation, and economic class conflict. In the period after the third congress, the priority concern of the government was the Zimbabwe situation. This called for the rapid creation of a military defensive and security capacity to defend Mozambique from the brutal assaults of the dying Smith regime, and concentration on military, material and political support to the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, combined with participation in regional and international efforts to find a solution leading to independence on the basis of majority rule. As soon as this solution came into sight, the Frelimo leadership turned their attention to a major drive, called the political and organisational offensive, personally spearheaded by President Samora Machel himself, to purge the state apparatus of corruption and illegality, of arbitary and irregular conduct by officials and among the police and security forces, of laxity, irresponsibility and neglect — in short of corruption in the widest sense, of all forms of anti-people practices which alienate the people from the government and erode the popular, democratic character of the state.

This offensive was intended to become a permanent feature of government life, yet inevitably it has proved difficult to sustain with the full vigour and effectiveness with which it was launched. So the question of corruption came up again at the fourth congress, and provided one of its most dramatic moments. A delegate from Manica, veteran of the armed struggle, broke off from his prepared text to turn to the platform behind him and say, "Even the Council of Ministers and the Central Committee have been infiltrated." Yes, agreed the President, not infiltrated by enemy agents, but corrupted by comforts, by the privileges of office. He went on to launch a powerful appeal for a revival of the spirit of self-sacrifice which had marked the years of the armed struggle, and called for qualified and competent cadres to be prepared to give up the comforts of life at the top, in the cities, and to go to work where their skills were needed, in the place of production. In the months following the congress a number of appointments were announced giving effect to this policy.

It can be seen from what has been said so far that the state's role in managing the economy is a terrain of sharp class struggle. Enemies of Frelimo, of socialism, concentrate their efforts on the area of economic control. By deliberate acts or omissions that cause suffering or deprivation to the people, they seek to make the aims of the revolution fail, to make it be seen to fail in the eyes of the people, and to stoke up the fires of discontent. As the C.C. report to the congress states:

> "The enemy seeks to create a breach between the Party and the people, between the leadership and the base. The enemy tries, on the other hand, to impose on our society values inspired by foreign models. In their language, their taste and opinions, they put forward a capitalist society attuned to the metropolitan centres of consumption, submissive to cultural imperialism."

It is in these social circles, abusing their official powers, and often tied in with hostile forces in neighbouring South Africa, that are to be found the arch instigators of the black market, which puts into illegal channels of circulation both luxury goods not available in the shops, and articles of prime necessity, including food supplies, which are often imported at the expense of Mozambique's limited foreign currency reserves. They do this for personal enrichment, at the cost of the people — who pay grossly inflated prices on the black market or go without — and to the detriment of the state-controlled and democratic circuits of distribution. Several delegates were critical of the loafers of the cities who have no visible means of support, dress and eat better than the workers, and live off the black market. The Congress approved the tough measures introduced a short while before against 'unarmed bandits' — speculators, hoarders, profiteers, and all who aid and abet them.

The Party

Victory in the struggle against the internal class enemy depends ultimately on the Party — on the correctness of its policies, its strength and unity, and its links with the working people of town and country. The Frelimo Party (this designation was approved by the congress, together with some minor up-dating and clarifications of the programme and statutes adopted at the 1977 congress) is the leading force of the state and the society. The CC report noted with satisfaction that in the past six years the Party had implanted itself in " a solid and irreversible way throughout the country."

Attending the congress as elected delegates were 173 workers, 195 peasants, 85 soldiers of the Mozambican Armed Forces, and 44 members of other defence and security forces. Thus 72% of the delegates were workers, peasants and soldiers. "This number reflects the nature of our Party and the social base of the Mozambican revolution," noted the report of the credentials committee. 105 of the delegates were women (15.2%). As to education, 54 delegates were illiterate, 60% had from four to nine years' education, and 53 delegates had higher education.

192 of the delegates (27.8%) were already militants of Frelimo before 1977. This signifies the continuity of party life. It also reveals that over two-thirds of the delegates had been in the Party for less than six years. Even more revealing of the extraordinarily rapid growth of the Party in recent years were the figures of Party membership, released for the first time. In April 1983 the Party had 110,323 members organised in 4,244 party cells. 53.5% were peasants, 18.9% workers.

Such rapid growth, most of it achieved by the huge, open and vigorously conducted campaign of 'structuring the Party' carried out in 1978, brings with it dangers, and mistakes made in the process were analysed by the congress. Political and class criteria of admission had not always been adhered to with sufficient consistency, and training and preparation of cadres had also suffered from some weaknesses. As a result, certain cadres tended to act in bureaucratic and formalistic ways, bringing into Party life some of the harmful tendencies seen in the state apparatus. Lack of experience, and the difficulty of identifying and playing a leading role, especially in relation to the tasks of economic planning and leadership, led many units of the Party into a sterile, even passive role, amounting to little more than relaying the slogans of the day "and exhortations unconnected with the concrete problems of the masses."

As a result, when the time approached for the holding of the fourth congress, which, in terms of the Party statutes, should have been within 5 years of the previous congress, the Party found itself unprepared. The first national conference of the Party, in March 1982, decided to confront this situation, delay the holding of the congress for a year, and prepare for it thoroughly by a deep-going campaign of revitalising the cells, and involving them in a wide-ranging dialogue with the masses about all aspects of the situation in the country. This careful preparation, involving collective study of draft theses for the congress, and thousands of public meetings up and down the country in factories, farms, villages, institutions of every sort, ministries, localities and workplaces, laid the foundation of a congress that was superbly organised, and which summarised and rounded off a profoundly democratic, critical and self-critical process of debate and consultation.

The pre-congress debates reverberated through the congress, and the message of the congress in turn reverberated through the nation, as was amply demonstrated by the May Day rally which immediately followed its conclusion. With a mobilisation that far exceeded expectations, bringing some 150-200,000 people out into the streets of Maputo in a colourful, confident and militant demonstration of unity around the perspectives of the congress, the May Day rally — "the best ever," by general consensus — set the seal on all that had gone before it, and underlined the real success of the congress.

War and economic setbacks

But if the Party was unprepared for the congress in 1982, the nation as a whole was even less ready for it. For by 1982 the country was in the grip of a double squeeze which began to call into question all the gains of the previous years, and even the capacity of the revolution to survive and defend itself. The principal source of this pressure was and remains the apartheid regime of neighbouring South Africa. In 1980, alarmed by the onward advance of the liberation struggle in South Africa, by the new momentum given to the liberation process throughout Southern Africa by the independence of Zimbabwe, and by the steady progress of the building in Mozambique of a free, anti-racist, anti-imperialist society — antithesis of the South African regime and threatening it by the strength of its example as an alternative — the Pretoria regime took over the armed gangs of the so-called MNR. This organisation, originally conceived by fascist security agents of the dying Portuguese colonial regime, and drawing upon some of the most brutal units created to terrorise people into withholding support for Frelimo, together with deserters and traitors from the movement, was taken over by Rhodesian intelligence as a strike force to weaken Mozambique's principled stand in support of the liberation struggle of the Zimbabwean people. The defeat of its settler patrons in 1980 threatened to bring the MNR to an end.

But Pretoria's intervention gave the MNR a new lease of life. The racists took over the training, financing, planning, arming, equipping and logistical support (by land, sea and air) of the armed gangs, and began directing them at the economic lifelines of Mozambique — at the roads and railways, the oil pipeline and fuel depots, at the network of rural shops, at power lines, at major development projects, at the technical advisers from both West and East who have been assisting Mozambique's efforts to overcome under-development. This deadly sabotage, designed to paralyse the economic life of the country, sow discontent, and prepare for more direct forms of intervention, was accompanied by acts of brutal terror, rape, abduction, mutilation and the like, designed to cow the people and create an atmosphere of instability which would not only frighten off foreign investment but also undermine the government and bring closer its downfall. Rumour-mongering and panic infected several areas, in face of the apparently unstoppable spread of this vicious banditry which even reached the capital in the second quarter of 1982. This clearly was not the right moment for holding a congress.

Worse, the apartheid criminals showed that they were prepared to use all other forms of aggression and destabilisation against Mozambique — from the raid on Matola in Januray 1981, to a series of incursions and provocations at places such as Ponto D'Ouro in the south and Ressano Garcia on the Transvaal border, to economic pressures affecting transport, power, currency matters and trade, to the infiltration of spies and would-be provocateurs and assassins, even down to interfering with the water supplies from rivers that rise in South Africa and cross Mozambique on their way to the ocean.

All this has compelled Mozambique to devote more of its human and material resources to defence, and to make defence against this 'undeclared war' waged by the racists the top priority of the day. Speaker after speaker at the congress rose to denounce the crimes of the bandits, to describe the tremendous difficulties of maintaining production and distribution in the areas infested by them, to criticise shortcomings in the organisation of an effective response to them, and to express an unyielding determination to rid the country of this destructive blight. For there can be not the slightest doubt that the bandits are deeply hated, and command no popular support whatsoever. They recruit by terror and bribery, and could not last more than a few weeks without the backing of their South African masters.

By a cruel turn of fate, this reactionary offensive against the Mozambican revolution has coincided with severe economic setbacks. The causes of these are several:

The economic crisis of the capitalist world since the mid-seventies, and especially its deepening in the eighties, together with the steep rise in oil prices, has reduced Mozambique's capacity to import the food, raw materials, spares and machinery it needs. Between 1981 and 1982 the average prices of Mozambique's exports fell by around 11%, while in the same period the average prices of her imports rose by 3%. Credit conditions have become tighter, markets have shrunk.

The worst drought in the history of the country, which has been going on for over two years, and became gravely serious with the almost total absence of rain in the rainy season of 1982/3, has decimated livestock, caused the loss of nearly all cereal production in most of the centre and south of the country, and negatively affected some 4 million Mozambicans.

The mistakes made in managing the economy, which have already been referred to.

The consequences of this double squeeze were plain to see in the economic reports given to the congress. Total agricultural production in 1982 fell by 2.4% in relation to 1981. (It must be borne in mind that population has been growing at around 2.5% a year). Industrial production in the same year (1982) was 2.2% lower than the 1977 level. Transport and communications fell by 6.7% in 1982, after growing by 15.4% over the previous 4 years. The gross value of domestic trade, which has remained constant from '77 to '81 (which signifies a real decline, given population growth), fell by 4.2% in 1982. Behind these dry figures lie increased shortages and scarcities, the disappearance of many goods from the shops, the reversion of many peasant producers to bare subsistence production for lack of any incentive to market their surplus, and widescale deprivation and suffering. All of which has been compounded by the activities of the black marketeers, and helps to explain why these unarmed bandits are seen as being as dangerous to the people's interests as the armed bandits, and why the fight back against both was the predominant theme of the congress.

The fight to defend the country against aggression and destabilisation, and the fight to improve production so as to meet the immediate needs of the people, were seen by the congress as being closely related to each other, and several measures were announced on both fronts soon after the congress. As though to underline the need to improve combat capacity and readiness to defend itself, Mozambique suffered two blatant acts of aggression from South Africa within a month of the congress. The first was the racists' aerial raid on Matola on 23 May, and the second the sending of two spy planes over Maputo a week after, one of which was shot down. The hot reception given to both lots of raiders showed that Mozambique's ability to fight back has indeed improved. In this most crucial of spheres, the fine words of the fourth congress are being resolutely put into practice. After 20 years of war, first against Portuguese colonialism, and then against the settler regime of Ian Smith, the Mozambican people are definitely not prepared to lie down submissively in the face of Pretoria's bullying.

On the contrary, the Frelimo Party displayed its unswerving commitment to its internationalist principles by inviting to its congress as representatives of the South African people, both the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party. The warmth with which Oliver Tambo and Moses Mabhida respectively were received matched the high honour of the invitation, and demonstrated once again that the unity of the progressive and revolutionary forces of our region, and the unity of the South African and Mozambican people in struggle against oppression and for liberation, are growing and irreversible trends.

Long live the Fourth Congress of the Frelimo Party!
A Luta Continua!

WHAT WENT WRONG WITH THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION?

The following interview was conducted by members of the editorial board of The African Communist with two leading officials of the Tudeh (Communist) Party of Iran who for obvious reasons must remain anonymous.

Could you tell us of the experience of the Tudeh Party in Iran since the 1979 Revolution?

As you know the revolution took place under the slogans of "Independence, Freedom and Social Justice", which was really the aim of the people and the anti-imperialist forces who took part in this revolution. Under the political leadership of the representatives of this middle class it was victorious in the first stage — namely — in overthrowing the monarchy. Our party, as the vanguard of the Iranian proletariat and as one of the main forces which took part in this revolution, which had paved the ground in the past 25 years before the revolution under the absolute dictatorship of the Shah to help to create the conditions for this overthrow, found itself with its class allies. Thus, after the victory of the first stage of the revolution the Central Committee moved to Tehran and started open activity.

How strong was the Tudeh Party at the time of the Revolution?

Organisationally the Tudeh Party of Iran was quite strong. We had our organisations inside Iran, one of the most important of which 3 or 4 years before the fall of the Shah was called Navid. The only newspaper which was distributed in all parts of the country was the *Navid* newspaper which opposed the policies of the Shah. No other organisation could claim that they could do what Navid did.

Would you say the Tudeh Party was the only effective underground organisation during the Shah's regime?

Politically, yes. After the revolution the Tudeh Party became much stronger, not only from an organisational point of view but also from the number of supporters. During those 25 years of dictatorship it was impossible for all the people of Iran to rid themselves of anti-communist and anti-Tudeh propaganda which was carried out not only by imperialism and its agents inside Iran, the Shah and the secret police Savak, but also unfortunately by some of the ultra-left forces and some of the anti-imperialist forces who took part in the revolution. So after the revolution we had this opportunity to go out to the people openly and publish our newspaper openly. This helped a lot.

The Party was completely legal after the revolution and had no restrictions on it?

Well the party was completely legal after the revolution but practically there were a lot of difficulties in its functioning. This was not only due to the anti-revolutionary forces who still existed in Iran who tried to hinder the activities of our party, but also due to the attitudes of the forces who took the leadership of the revolution — the radical Moslems — who did not want to share power with other forces active in the revolution. Because of their monopolistic attitudes they were afraid that freedom for leftwing forces, especially our party, would be dangerous to their leadership of the revolution in Iran.

What was the relationship between the Tudeh Party and the Government of Iran?

The relationship was a mainly political relationship. Our party as the vanguard of the proleteriat and its supporters and as the only force which stood by the toiling masses of Iran, supported the anti-imperialist leadership of the revolution which was under attack by the remnants of the

Shah's supporters, which was under attack from the whole imperialist world. It was obvious that our party couldn't base its relationship with the government on the government's attitude to our party, but rather on the principles that we had to abide by. In our fight against imperialism and in our struggle for the needs and wants of the people this was the basis of all our relationships with other forces.

The Tudeh Party had no position in the government apparatus?

No.

What was the position of the organised working class, the trade unions?

The working class of Iran, from the organisational point of view, wasn't very strong. During the long years of the Shah's dictatorship they weren't allowed to organise and express themselves freely. However, during the Shah's last few years the regime couldn't stop the working class and accepted the existence of trade unions. But the regime tried to put its own agents at the top of these trade unions so that those organisations couldn't carry out the workers' interests. This brought the idea to the working class that these organisations weren't really effective.

In addition class changes took place during the last 10 years of the Shah's regime inside the working class and inside the economic structure which was moving from feudalism towards a dependent capitalist economy. A lot of peasants lost their land and moved to the town, where they entered the ranks of the working class. So we have a very young working class with little experience. After the revolution the attitude of the radical Moslems was that trade unions would be used by the left-wing forces to their own interests, so they tried to oppose the organisation of the working class. We also have to add the activities amongst the working class of the ultra-leftists, although they couldn't establish themselves at all. These factors all combined to make it very difficult for the working class of Iran to become organised.

What has been the main class force in the Iranian government since the Revolution and how has it changed?

In order to answer this question I would start from a year before the revolution. The forces that opposed the Shah's regime were very wide, comprising not only the toiling masses — the working class and peasantry — and the middle class, but also the liberal bourgeoisie, the 'bazaar' bourgeoisie, encompassing mainly the commercial bourgeoisie. Of course they were all at the tail end of the masses. So there was an anti-imperialist front which consisted of many different forces against the Shah. Their main aim was to overthrow the Shah's regime. They didn't want the Shah. But when it came to what they wanted of course they differed a lot.

A class struggle started after the Shah's overthrow and this front started to disintegrate. After the revolution, although the leadership of the revolution succeeded in taking power, the government was taken over by the political representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie.

When the land and industries of counter-revolutionaries and the Shah's dependants took place, this government of the liberal bourgeoisie started to back-pedal and to oppose the wishes of the Imam Khomeini and the radical Moslems, to oppose further nationalisation. This class struggle intensified in the ruling circles, until at one point the Prime Minister went and had a meeting with the US security adviser Brzezinski, who was the main plotter against the Iranian revolution. This meeting took place without the knowledge of Imam Khomeini and our people. Their response was to take over the American Embassy because they regarded this as spy centre in Teheran where a lot of activity was going on for overthrowing the regime. This crisis also led to the overthrow of the liberal bourgeois government of Bazargan.

After this and other coup attempts were neutralised, the US and their agents intensified their struggle against the radical Moslems in the government. At that time Bani Sadr came into power and became the first President of Iran. Then the war with Iraq broke out. The plot at that time was to get together all the forces against the revolution — from the Shah's supporters to the ultra-left — around Bani Sadr and through him and with the aid of the war weaken the Iranian economy so that a creeping coup d'etat could take place.

Would you say that the war was instigated by the imperialists?

Yes. The imperialists launched this war, using Iraqi President Saddam against the Iranian revolution.

Inside the government and ruling circles all the radical Moslems gathered round the Imam's line. At this time the 'bazaar' bourgeoisie and the commercial bourgeoisie were not very sure of Bani Sadr because the Shah's supporters were around him. So they allied themselves with the radical Moslems, or perhaps it is more realistic to say that they didn't oppose the Imam's line against Bani Sadr, and so Bani Sadr's plot was neutralised. This was a very important victory for the revolution. After the impeachment of Bani Sadr the radical Moslems were in the majority in the ruling circles and had the power to carry out the aims of the revolution, but precisely at this point they hesitated and failed to implement the land reforms, the nationalisation of foreign trade and other radical reforms necessary for the revolution. One of the main factors that contributed to this trend was the start of the open opposition of the 'bazaar' bourgeoisie who were hoping to get the majority in the ruling circle as the result of the fall of Bani Sadr. But they couldn't. And precisely this was the point when the radical Moslems had the majority in the ruling circles and they should have used their power to implement what they had promised to the people — to implement the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The 'bazaar' bourgeoisie started using the slogan 'not east nor west' which was the weakness of the radical Moslems. They said they wanted to find a third way, not being dependent on the west and not getting help from the east, from the socialist countries, not accepting the co-operation of the internal left-wing forces, especially the Tudeh Party of Iran. This slogan was used, especially by the right wingers, to force the radical Moslems to retreat step by step from their original positions and slogans. Also, the pressure of anti-communist blackmail was used. For example, whatever reforms were introduced, say food rationing, it was attacked by the right-wingers as a 'communist' programme.

The war played a very important and dominant role here. For the radical Moslems, in order to win the war against Saddam and imperialism, thought they should not sort this struggle out amongst themselves inside the ruling bodies. They tried to retreat step by step, thinking that they could come back after winning the war and regain what they had lost in retreat. They did not know that this step by step retreat would accumulate quantitatively to a point which would cause a qualitative change — a class change — inside the ruling group.

That is what has now taken place, in fact, and now that the majority is with the right-wing forces (majority in the ruling bodies, in the government) the radical Moslems have had to capitulate to the right wing forces.

The party always seemed to place a great deal of reliance on the Imam, and regarded him as being an incorruptible person. Do you think they placed too much importance on his role as an individual?

We never supported the Imam Khomeini because of his person but because he was the leader of the revolution which was directed against imperialism. For cultural and religious as well as political reasons — and don't forget there is 70% illiteracy in Iran — the people had tremendous faith in the Imam. If the policies proposed by Imam Khomeini at that time had been implemented the slogans of the revolution would have been achieved. We supported the anti-imperialist line of the Imam — not the whole line, but the crux of the propositions he put forward which was progressive. It is part of history that the first phase of the revolution was very successful. They succeeded in overthrowing the monarchy, one of the main bastions of imperialism and reaction. After the revolution the radical Moslems under the leadership of Imam Khomeini nationalised the industries, confiscated the lands of the counter-revolutionaries and tried to carry out radical reforms which were all supported by our party. The approach of our party was the approach of any communist party towards its allies — that is unity and constructive criticism. For example, we criticised Khomeini's attack on the Kurdish people, and he later admitted that he had been wrong. And we criticised the attitude of Khomeini and the government towards help from the Soviet Union to revolutionary Afghanistan. There were other differences which we did not raise publicly but which we discussed inside the Party and one could have seen our policies in our journals. But we didn't want to weaken his leadership because his overall policies at that time were anti-imperialist, formulated by our Party as the Imam's line and supported by our Party.

Do you not now think this line was a mistake?

Our policies were the correct policies. We could not have put forward a different line. The fact that we did not succeed in everything was due to objective and subjective factors over which we had no control.

You mention the nationalisation of industry and land reform as achievements. Have there been any other achievements which you can say were gained from the revolution?

The Iranian revolution was one of the most important events of the recent decades of this century. As you know, before it Iran was wholly dependent on imperialism. We literally had 50,000 to 55,000 US military advisers inside Iran. After the revolution all these advisers were expelled, all the listening posts and military bases inside Iran were removed. We have 2,500km of border with the Soviet Union which was under survelliance by US imperialists with their listening posts. They were all removed. The overthrow of the 2,500 years of monarchy that the Shah's regime was proud of is a very important achievement of the revolution. 70% of our industries were nationalised, a lot of land was confiscated and was due to be distributed amongst the peasants. The freedom, although limited, that our party enjoyed, and some other leftwing forces that were not there at all at the time of the Shah — for 25 years our party was under suppression — this is another important achievement of the revolution. The ground was ready for the working class of Iran to be organised and trade unions started flourishing. Then there was the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Despite some of its deficiencies, our party voted for this constitution. Had the constitution been carried out the revolution would have succeeded in this phase of reconstruction. More than 98% of the people voted for the constitution.

Yes, of course, this revolution had many achievements, and one should not ignore them.

What triggered off the attack on the Tudeh Party, and what has been the consequence of the attack?

With the change in the class nature of the ruling bodies, the hesitant radical Moslems lost the majority to the right-wingers, and now they have capitulated completely. The right-wingers were determined to stop the radical Moslems from carrying out anti-imperialist reforms in keeping with the anti-imperialist line of Imam Khomeini. When the radical Moslems retreated, the right-wingers saw that the main danger to their own power and their anti-revolutionary activities was our Party, the Tudeh Party of Iran, which had always stood by the slogans of the revolution: independence, freedom and social justice. The Iranian people had suffered enormous losses before, during and after the revolution and would not readily have abandoned the fight to implement the slogans of the revolution. Our Party was the only force that could lead them in this struggle, so it was obvious that the right-wingers had to get rid of our Party.

Of course they had to convince the radical Moslems that the slogans chosen at the beginning of the revolution were not Islamic, that to confiscate the land of the landowners, to confiscate the property of those who own it, even if they are counter-revolutionaries, is contrary to Islam, and that the only ones who will gain if these slogans are implemented will be the Tudeh Party of Iran. They argued that if Imam Khomeini was determined to carry out these slogans he would find his only hope in the Tudeh Party and this would eventually result in giving the power to the

Tudeh Party, which had always stood by these slogans. So we were attacked. Our Party's headquarters was taken over, our Party's organ was stopped from being published, even though we were still legal. Then the Party's leadership was imprisoned on trumped up charges of spying for the Soviet Union. They were subjected to vicious tortures, worse than even in the time of the Shah. Our class enemies did not want only to eliminate the leadership of the Party, they also wanted to stop the Party as the only hope of the people. That is why they had to use the most barbaric methods, including drugs, to bring some of our leaders on to the television to confess that their policies were wrong.

Now that our Party has been made illegal, the work of the Party has become most difficult, but the Party continues to carry out its duties despite all the difficulties and persecution. We recognise that things have taken a turn for the worse, but we feel there is still hope for the revolution for both subjective and objective reasons. The subjective factor is the unity of the communist movement, the political and theoretical unity that has been built inside Iran around the Tudeh Party. This is one of the most important achievements of our people's struggle and this means that the homogeneous and united leadership of the working class and toiling masses of Iran still exists.

The objective factor is that the revolutionary will of the people still exists because of the conditions that surround them. One can see examples of it in the recent protests by the working people against the reactionary labour law that has been proposed by the Ministry of Labour, the protests of the peasants against the return of the lands to the counter-revolutionaries and Shah supporters who had fled the country, lands given to the peasants after the revolution but now returned to the previous owners. Because workers and peasants are now being put in prison, their revolutionary will is stimulated. The crisis that exists has been aggravated. It is important that this revolutionary will of the people be organised and the people be led with a clear programme in order to safeguard the remnants of the revolution and to carry it through still further.

And here our party puts forward again the proposition it raised at the beginning of the revolution — that a popular anti-imperialist democratic front must be created. We are working for that. We are convinced the right-wingers will not succeed in convincing the people that we are their enemies. This was shown, for example, on the first day of May, when they tried, after the televised confessions, to bring the people on to the streets to demonstrate against our Party. They were not even able to get a few hundred people out. This worried the right-wingers and still does, because our Party is still the main hope of the toiling people.

We still have many activists in Iran — of course working in a very difficult situation. But they are getting themselves organised. This takes time. There is also the Party's organisation outside Iran which is very active. Recently there has been news that the 18th Plenary of the Central Committee of our Party is being planned. We publish a weekly newspaper which we send inside Iran "Rahe Tudeh", which means "The Way of the People". This helps a lot with our work.

The unity amongst the Communists in Iran, which was only obtained through struggle, is one of the most important political factors in the attempt to save the revolution. It is helping other sections of anti-imperialist left-wing forces to adopt correct policies and rid themselves of Maoist and ultra-left ideas. The most important section here was the Organisation of Iranian Fedaian Guerrillas, which in its development changed into the Organisation of the Iranian People's Fedaian (Majority) and adopted policies based on proletarian internationalism very similar to the policies of our Party. They have accepted the role of our Party as the vanguard of the Iranian proletariat.

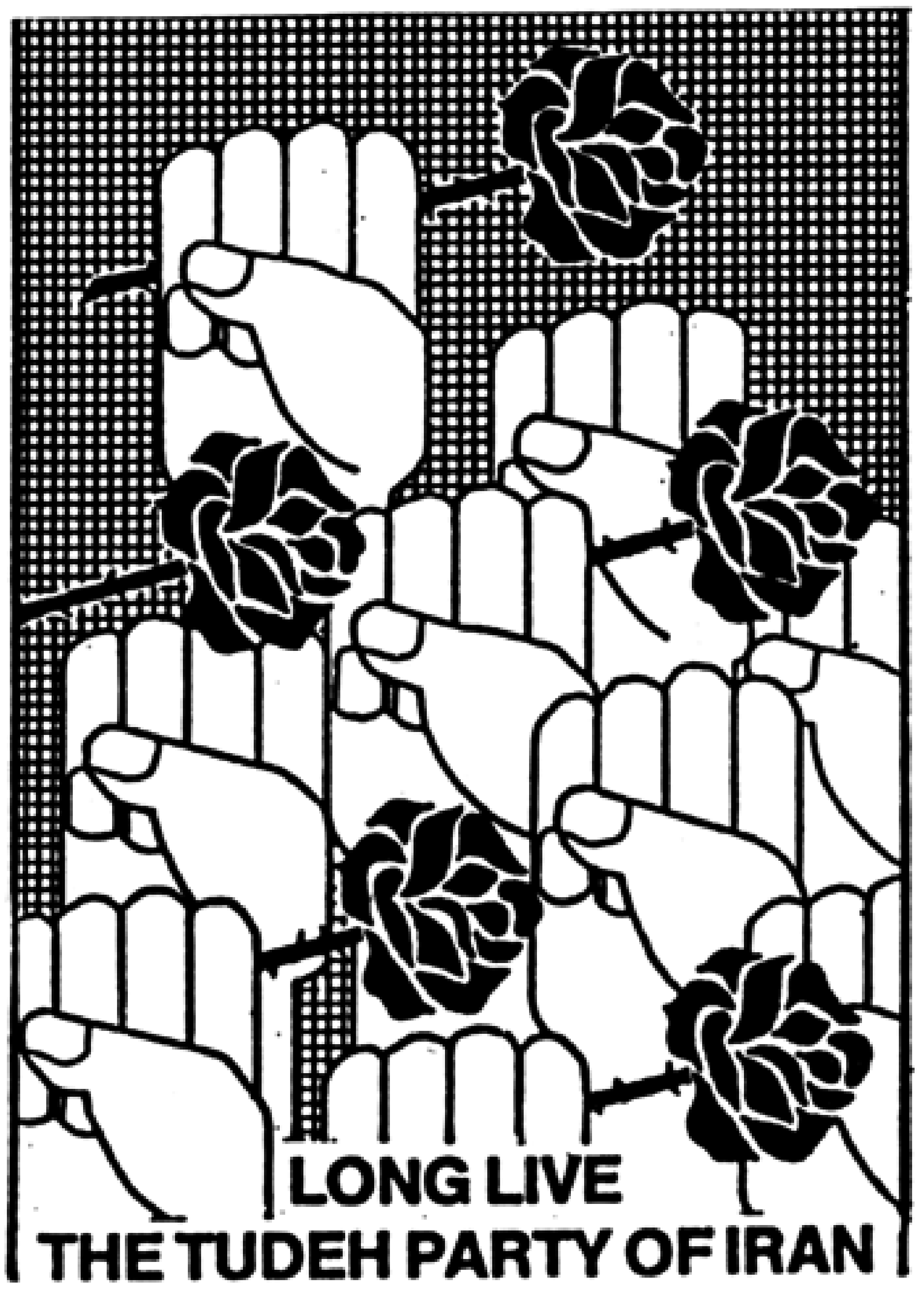
Could you tell us something about the Tudeh Party's policy on the national question in Iran?

The Tudeh Party has always stood for the national rights of all the different nations inside our country — Kurds, Turks, Turkamans, Arabs — with the right of self-determination. Our programme of 1980 lays down the right of every nation to govern itself within the borders of Iran. This is a very difficult problem to solve given the position of the Moslems in the government. Our Party has always stressed that the anti-imperialist question is the most important and that other interests should be centred around this question. Whilst imperialism is attacking Iran we have to save our revolution from these attacks in order to be able to solve the national and other questions.

What about relations with the Soviet Union, the other socialist countries and the international Communist movement?

The progressive countries, the socialist countries with the Soviet Union at their helm, have always stood by our people. After the revolution they were the only force that stood against imperialist intervention. It was the Soviet Union that voted in the United Nations against the economic blockade, and in practice the Soviet Union made many concessions to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Soviet Union started many economic projects in Iran although these were given a very low profile by the government. It was the right-wing forces who opposed co-operation with the Soviet Union, using the slogan "neither east nor west" to push the radical Moslems into retreat. After the attack on our Party and the arrest of our leaders there came the attack on the Soviet Embassy and the falsehoods about spying, followed by an acceleration of the move to the west. At the Williamsburg conference Iran was welcomed to their camp. Trade with Britain has trebled in the last year and direct links with the US are being established. There is even talk of the revival of Cento which linked Turkey and Iran in an anti-Soviet pact. The recent attack by Turkey on the Kurdish people in northern Iraq was either ignored or even welcomed by the Iranian authorities.

Today, in the face of the imperialist offensive throughout the Middle East, we need the help and solidarity of all progressive organisations and individuals. We call on them to stand by our people, to stand by our Party and to protest in any way that is possible against the atrocities that are being perpetrated against our Party and against the Iranian revolution.


LONG LIVE
THE TUDEH PARTY OF IRAN

A ROLE FOR THE AFRICAN BOURGEOISIE?

By Phineas Malinga

There has been no greater obstacle to development in Southern Africa than the South African regime. Its policies have condemned the rural areas of the Republic to remain either in the grip of a semi-feudal system of landlordism or as overcrowded, impoverished reservoirs of cheap labour for the mines. Its attempts to erect a facade of pseudo-independence for certain of the Reserves have effectively cut those areas off from the mainstream of economic life both in the Republic and internationally. Not content with these achievements, it is now increasingly interfering with the development of neighbouring territories. Its interference takes every possible form from massive, destructive military incursions of terrorism and sabotage in Mozambique to the maintenance of anachronistic forms of economic integration with Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana.

Against this background, the proposition that the South African regime is going to establish a "Southern African Development Bank" seems at first sight to be a joke in poor taste. It is, however, no joke but a proposition which has been repeatedly put forward over the last couple of years and now appears to be moving towards some sort of concrete action.

Originally, the development bank formed part of P.W. Botha's idea of "a confederation of Southern African states." This nebulous concept, which has sometimes been compared with the European Economic Community, seems to have aroused suspicion even among the compliant leaders of the so-called independent homelands within South Africa and gets no further towards definition, let alone implementation. In early 1982, South African newspapers were carrying regime-inspired stories about the likely establishment of a permanent secretariat for the confederation and the linking of the development bank with the secretariat.

By November 1982, when a "summit conference" was held at which P.W. Botha met leaders of Transkei, Boputhatswana, Venda and Ciskei, the idea of the bank was being promoted on its own, with both secretariat and confederation receding into the background. The "summit conference" issued a long list of decisions in which the word "confederation" did not appear and there was no mention of a secretariat. The bank, on the other hand, was billed as the most important point on which agreement had been reached. A target date of September 1, 1983, was set for its establishment and a committee of officials was given the task of drawing up its articles of association. A South African journalist summarised the points agreed as follows:

> "It is understood the bank will be established on lines similar to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in that full membership will be open only to sovereign states. Initially the associate members will be the five governments represented at this week's summit but its planners are hoping that eventually other Southern African states like Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho will be attracted to join.
>
> "Leaders of self-governing homelands like Kwa-Zulu and Gazankulu have cautiously welcomed the concept of a development bank, but have expressed fears that it may be wielded as a political weapon to induce them to accept independence."

The short-term political objectives of the South African regime are very obvious from this statement. The comparison with the IMF and World Bank is made partly to give the whole scheme an air of importance and partly to make it clear that capitalist criteria will be used in deciding the bank's objectives. The absurd allegation that membership will be confined to sovereign states is intended to flatter the Bantustan leaders. Its second motive is precisely the one that Buthelezi suspects; membership of the bank will be used as an inducement to tempt him into so-called independence. Next, the bank will try to weave new nets in which to ensnare the economies of neighbouring states and increase their dependence on South Africa.

Broader Strategy

It would, however, be a mistake to dismiss the bank simply as a manoeuvre to score a few immediate political points. It fits in with a much broader strategy. The major question on which it throws light is that of the whole approach of the South African regime towards the African bourgeoisie.

The idea of encouraging the growth of an African bourgeoisie and enlisting it as an ally in the fight to save capitalism is not a new one. It was much discussed in the Smuts-Hofmeyr years. Harry Oppenheimer has continued to advocate it ever since. In other words, it has long been the preferred strategy of an influential section of the South African ruling class. From 1948 until very recently, however, it was a strategy which could not be reconciled with the policies of the South African regime. Apartheid as practised under Malan, Strijdom and Verwoerd was a policy of all-out national oppression directed against every national group other than the whites. The only capacities in which Africans were invited to collaborate with their rulers were as Bantustan bureaucrats or non-commissioned officers in the South African police. These policies were obviously calculated to antagonise the nascent African bourgeoisie. The regime did not care, in those days, about antagonising them. It considered itself strong enough to take on that enemy as well as others.

P.W. Botha, on the other hand, clearly feels the need of allies. He is making an open bid for support in the Coloured and Indian communities. There is no equivalent move towards any section of the Africans, who are insolently ignored in the new political arrangements planned by the regime. Nevertheless, there are signs that the policy of the regime towards the African bourgeoisie is not altogether static. The development bank is intended to do something more than simply continue existing government handouts to the Bantustan bureaucracy. These handouts involve amounts which are in themselves substantial. For example, payments to "The Republic of Venda" from the South African regime in 1980 and 1981 totalled R172m, while Bophutatswana received a total of R589m during its first four years of "independence".[2]. Such amounts are amply sufficient to pay the officials and policemen who run these bogus states. They are, however, trivial if it is a question of bringing economic development on any serious scale to two desperately impoverished areas with a combined population of some 1,700,000.

Official sources have admitted as much. A report to the Bureau for Economic Research published in November, 1982, claimed that from 1975 to 1980, real per capita gross domestic product had shown some modest increases in the Bantustans — from R70 to R85 in Transkei, from R117 to R159 in Bophutatswana, from R50 to R69 in Venda and from R50 to R70 in Ciskei. It went on to admit that these increases were mainly attributable to remittances of wages from migrant workers. Only about a million of the 4.6m Africans in the Bantustans were economically active in 1980 and the majority of individuals had "no measurable annual income."[3].

Piet Koornhof, the Minister of Cooperation and Development, conceded that these figures were not satisfactory. He went on to claim that economic development of the Bantustans was "one of the Government's highest priorities" and specifically mentioned the role of the projected development bank in this context. He did not explain its role in any detail, but he went on to talk about "industrial incentives and concessions to encourage regional development." This was related to existing policies. "Since the implementation of new industrial incentives in April of this year (i.e. 1982), no fewer than 396 applications for concessions have been approved by the Decentralisation Board. The applicants were planning investments of R688.5m and would provide work for 33,239 people, of whom 26,616 would be black."[4]

Development Facade

It is obvious from this last point that the "concessions" under discussion here are essentially permissions for white entrepreneurs to set up factories, etc. in or near the labour reservoirs of the reserves or Bantustans. This has for some time been the main thrust of "regional development" in South Africa. The way it works is very simple. Development outside the main urban areas has two disadvantages from the point of view of the capitalist: firstly, remoteness from the principal markets. Rock bottom wage levels provide some compensation for these disadvantages but, given the low level of black wages in the urban centres, there is not enough in it for the capitalist on that score alone. Government "incentives" therefore make up the difference. The capitalist laughs all the way to the bank and the regime achieves a facade of development to lend credibility to the fiction that the labour reservoirs constitute viable independent economies.

For the sake of the regime's propaganda exercise it would be highly desirable to have at least a few enterprises owned by blacks as part of the facade. The extreme shortage of black capital is an obstacle and it is here that the development bank may have a role to play. It could provide funds for a limited number of Africans to set up in business as showcases for Bantustan development.

Meanwhile, such growth of an African bourgeoisie as is actually taking place is concentrated in the urban areas. This, of course, is totally in conflict with the theories of Verwoerdian apartheid. Who does not remember Verwoerd's statement that "there is no room for the Bantu in white society above the level of certain forms of labour?" Such theories, however, could not stand against the laws of history and of economics. In spite of all the artificial obstacles placed in its way by apartheid, economic development has to taka place in those areas which are economically most favourable for it and economic development cannot completely by-pass the majority of the population. Therefore the number of black entrepreneurs has slowly and painfully grown. While the great majority of black shopkeepers still run the traditional corner shop on a shoestring, a few are moving into the supermarket league and there is one firm — Blackchain — which is laying the foundation for a chain of supermarkets. While black manufacturing has mostly remained at the background level, Mr Habakuk Sikawane now employs five hundred people in his furniture factory.

The organisation which claims to speak for the African businessman is the National African Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC). Its membership has increased from about 2,000 to about 10,000 today and it has announced a target of 20,000 for 1985. Both NAFCOC and its president, Sam Motsuenyane, receive a great deal of publicity nowadays in the South African Press and are courted and patronised by all sorts of establishment figures. For example, the 1981 congress of NAFCOC was addressed by a senior official of the Reserve Bank and a director of the Anglo American Corporation.

Neither the regime nor white liberals of the Oppenheimer type make any secret of their reason for attaching importance to NAFCOC. They see the growth of an African bourgeoisie as "a factor of stability" and a source of "economic competition far less dangerous than revolutionary violence."[5]

To a certain extent, NAFCOC and its spokesmen respond to these hopes. They do speak against revolutionary violence and they do hold out individual economic advancement to the African people as an alternative way forward, in contradiction to the policy of the national liberation movement. They do not, however, offer support to the regime or to the existing system. Among the pronouncements of Motsuenyane which have received Press publicity, the following are fairly typical:

> "Apartheid and its denial to the majority of people in South Africa of their basic rights is a tremendous indictment of free enterprise."
>
> "NAFCOC is. . .more and more motivated to fight the impediments and strengthened in determination to speak out."
>
> "This system is detested throughout the world and I've always said South Africa must come out of its shell and allow history to take its course. This society has to be completely overhauled and completely nullified."[6]

It is not difficult to understand why he, and others like him, speak like this in spite of the fact that they have, in the conventional bourgeois phrase, "acquired a stake in society." The African businessman has the odds stacked against him because he is an African. He faces a host of bureaucratic obstacles to the establishment of his business. Whatever kind words may be said to him by directors of Anglo American, he meets with neither kindness nor cooperation from his white counterparts. On the contrary, the small white entrepreneurs — shopkeepers, owners of small factories, transport contractors, builders, etc. — are thoroughly alarmed by the rise of African rivals and do all they can to freeze the Africans out.[7]

In other words, the efforts so far being made, both by the regime and by eminent capitalists, to encourage the growth of an African bourgeoisie, are still half-hearted. They fall far short of what would be needed to make the African businessman identify himself fully with the ruling class. As things stand now and seem likely to stand in the foreseeable future, the salient fact of life for the African bourgeoisie is still the fact of national oppression and discrimination.

Notes

1. Ivor Wilkins, political correspondent of the Johannesburg *Sunday Times*, November 14, 1982.
2. Ministerial reply in House of Assembly, reported in *The Star*, October 7, 1981.
3. Report summarised in *The Star* November 16, 1982.
4. Reported in *The Star* November 22, 1982.
5. From an article by Martin Adelberg in *Rand Daily Mail* September 9, 1982.
6. Reported in various issues of the *Financial Mail*.
7. The *Sunday Times* of May 31, 1981 told a typical story of obstacles faced by an African who started a printing works. He encountered both official hostility and opposition from the white business community.

AFRICA NOTES AND COMMENT

By Du Bois

ETHIOPIA: Towards A Marxist-Leninist Vanguard

The Second Congress of COPWE (Commission for Organising the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia) took place in January, 1983. Whilst the Congress dealt with the entire range of perspectives and problems associated with the revolutionary transformation of Ethiopia, a central issue was the establishment of a Marxist-Leninist Party of the working people. In the words of comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam, Chairman of COPWE:

> "The special significance of the Second Congress lies in the fact that it has the responsibility of charting the necessary strategy for the establishment of the Party."

This is in line with the dominant political line of Ethiopian revolutionaries that the complex tasks of socialist construction cannot be achieved without a vanguard party, a Marxist-Leninist Party which will strengthen national independence, popular democracy and the economic, political and ideological basis of the developing socialist formation. The process of Party-building in Ethiopia has gone through a number of unique stages. Unlike Angola and Mozambique where Marxist-Leninist parties have been created recently, Ethiopia had no mass-based party or revolutionary movement which served as the social basis out of which grew the vanguard parties of Mozambique and Angola. Such a movement and party have had to be created by the revolutionary armed forces which overthrew the feudal order presided over by Haile Selassie. This task began, properly speaking, in 1979, five years after the successful revolution and amidst the difficulties and hardships of the counter-revolution within Ethiopia, the invasion by Somalia and serious economic problems.

COPWE was set up in 1979 with the purpose of launching the political, ideological and organisational activities necessary for the creation of a party of the working people. COPWE, therefore, was not yet a vanguard organisation — its task being to plan, prepare and work towards the creation of such a party. It can best be characterised as a transitional political organisation, a prototype of the future vanguard party. Its main features, however, were clearly established — its organisational basis rested on the principle of democratic centralism, its ideological foundation, Marxism-Leninism. The link between the vanguard party and the people — peasants (nearly 85% of the population), industrial and agricultural workers and the middle strata — was to be the basic organisations (primary party organisations) and the mass organisations of peasants, workers, women, youth and students, the intelligentsia and small commodity producers.

According to the report of the second congress of COPWE, presented by comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam, significant advances had been made in the process of party building but much more remained to be done. COPWE's cadre policy objective has been the training, admission and placement of "militants who have made outstanding contribution to the revolution in the political, economic and social fields and through their participation in the armed struggle." In this respect a number of measures were adopted and implemented. Nearly 46 COPWE offices have been set up in strategic locations. The number of basic organisations of COPWE which have the responsibility of organising and politicising the working people and so ensuring the implementation of policy and decisions has increased by nearly 450 since the first congress, including 162 within the revolutionary army.

The class composition of COPWE has also been changing, reflecting the increasing role of the working class, though numerically it is still very small. In November 1981 COPWE's membership was: workers — 2.9%; peasants — 1.2%; the intelligentsia, civil service and members of the Revolutionary Army — 95.9%. By the end of 1982 the composition was as follows: workers — 21.7%; peasants — 3.3% and other strata — 75%. No doubt Ethiopia's further industrialisation and economic advancement will provide the material basis for the growing role of the working class in the future vanguard party.

Along with organisation, cadre training has been given high priority on the basis that "the education and training of members is the only means to create the most reliable condition in which the programmes, decisions, directives and policies of the organisation can easily be imparted to the working people and implemented." The primary units of political and ideological training of present and prospective members of COPWE are the study circles of which more than 6,500 have already been set up. At the same time almost 2,845 cadres have graduated in short-term political and ideological courses from the COPWE Political School and integrated within the COPWE structures. These apart, "a sizeable number of comrades" have received and are receiving training in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries as part of the agreements of cooperation with the Communist Parties of these countries.

COPWE has also paid special attention to the activities of the mass organisations of the people and COPWE cadres have been playing important roles in strengthening and organising these movements. About one-third of Ethiopia's youth are orgaised within REYA (Ethiopia Youth Association) and more than half the country's women into REWA (Ethiopia Women's Association). The other major achievements of COPWE since the first congress have been the consolidation of the All Ethiopia Trade Union (AETU) and the all Ethiopia Peasants' Association (AEPA). The Urban Dwellers' Associations (UDA's) has also been strengthened. At the time of the second congress more than 1,300,000 persons were serving in the executive bodies of these mass organisations.

Popular democracy and socialism are inseparable. The building and strengthening of the mass organisations of the people and the interaction of these with party and government are the guarantee of "the full political participation of the masses" in the construction of socialist society. This is at the heart of the process of socialist construction in Ethiopia.

In his closing remarks comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam reminded delegates afresh that the major task remained the creation of the vanguard party. "...the primary issue which cannot be ignored nor laid aside for an indefinite time is the establishment of the Working People's Party." And this is the task which has to be fulfilled in the period between this historic second congress and the next congress of COPWE.

THE ECA — Towards an African Common Market?

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) celebrated its silver jubilee in Addis Ababa at the end of April, 1983. The proposal to establish a specialised agency of the United Nations to concentrate on the economic problems of African countries, the vast majority of whom were still colonised, was first put forward by the UN General Assembly in 1947. It met with determined resistance by the colonial powers such as Britain, France and Belgium, who were keen to maintain their economic grip on the continent. A decade later, in 1958, the ECA was finally created. Its composition reflected the power that colonialism still retained over Africa: of the 15 members, 8 were independent African states, 6 were European powers such as Britain, France and Belgium, and, of all countries, South Africa was part of the original ECA. By 1965, however, after difficult struggles within the organisation and the UN, the ECA became fully African in its composition. The creation of the OAU two years earlier had provided a further impetus "to make the ECA truly representative of Africa".

Given the magnitude of Africa's socio-economic problems then and now, problems which have their roots in the colonial period and status into which the majority of African countries were cast, the ECA's task and role have been difficult and beset by enormous problems. Its achievements over the last 25 years may not have been spectacular, yet its work and role have been important in Africa's attempts to attain economic independence and development. The ECA is the only pan-African organisation to provide a forum where African countries can collectively discuss common economic experiences, perspectives and problems.

This led to the Tunis Conference of 1971 which adopted the Monrovia strategy of development for African countries. In turn, this has evolved into the adoption of the more recent Lagos plan of action for the 1980's. In this sense the ECA has succeeded in bringing together countries with different socio-economic bases, different political and ideological perspectives and with differing degrees of economic development and problems to confront common difficulties and means of solving them. Among its more lasting contributions has been the support it provides for the creation of regional economic communities such as ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), the proposed Central African Community and the East African Community, now sadly defunct.

Southern Africa's own regional community, the SADCC, was in line with the development strategy embodied in the Lagos plan.

The ECA has also succeeded in establishing some 25 to 30 economic institutions over the continent in the fields of banking (the African Development Bank), manpower planning and resources, statistics, technology, demography and natural resources surveys. These are important resource centres whose roles and activity can be enhanced as Africa faces the next quarter century. The problems remaining to be tackled and solved are indeed vast. Among the most urgent of these problems is the Continent's food crisis and the attendant difficulties for development this poses.

In his opening address Mengistu Haile Mariam, the President of socialist Ethiopia, reminded the participants at the 25th anniversary celebrations that despite Africa's "immense agricultural resources" the continent is at present dependent on grain charities from the developed countries. He went on to warn delegates that such a situation "makes not only the economy, but the very existence of developing countries dependent on them" and that "food policy has become the main strategy of developed countries to perpetuate their control over developing countries".

President Moi of Kenya reinforced the point when he said that, in addition to food imports, which drain a country's badly-needed foreign exchange, "developed countries have tended to use food as a political weapon, to put pressure on the African independent countries to reduce the latter's political and economic independence". Both presidents were undoubtedly referring to the neo-colonial strategies adopted by the developed capitalist countries to control and dominate the continent's raw material resources and to perpetuate its dependent economic status. Today, more than at any time, Africa faces the supreme challenge of breaking the stranglehold which these countries, and more particularly the transnational corporations, hold over the continent.

The ECA itself, in a document entitled, "Implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action — Some Recommendations and Proposals for the Guidance of Member States", published in 1981, noted the extent to which the finance, technology and manpower resources of the TNC's dominate the mineral, plantation agriculture, manufacturing, banking, insurance, transport and communications and distribution sectors of the economies of the independent African states. The document went on to recommend that "to achieve the long-term objectives of self-reliance, self-sustainment and sovereignty over natural resources: measures to maximise the benefits and minimise the costs of the presence of the transnationals in African economies...should be adopted".

Consequences of Exploitation

The bi-monthly journal, *Africa and Asia Today* (3.83), using United Nations, ECA, ILO and other source papers, gives us a picture of the comprehensive scope, character and consequence of the TNCs' and capitalist countries' neo-colonial domination and exploitation of Africa:

1. Africa's total foreign debt rose by 14.6% annually over the last ten years reaching 21.1 billion dollars by 1979. The borrowings have come primarily from banking consortiums in the west, together with international imperialist-dominated agencies such as the IMF and IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development), an American agency. Because the price for such loans is high interest rates, African countries have had to borrow more money to repay existing debts and the interest on them. It is estimated that one-third of the finance granted as state loans goes towards meeting repayment schedules.

2. Africa provides the TNCs with the highest return and profits in the world. For example, Lonrho derived 73% of its profits from its African operations in 1978, while American companies made 50% higher profits from investments in Africa than in all the developing countries put together. Whilst the inflow of investment capital to Africa from 1970-1978 was 4.3 billion dollars, the outflow of profits was 15.92 billion dollars.

3. Far from providing finance-capital resources to enhance African countries' development policies an ILO study pointed out that 60% of all foreign investments went towards the exploitation of natural resources, 34% to capturing African markets in one or other sector, and 6% to the exploitation of cheap labour.

4. Technology and technology-transfer have become an important weapon of the TNCs to retain their domination over African economies. It should be noted too that the IMF (International Monetary Fund), far from acting "from purely economic considerations" in granting loans to crisis-ridden countries, uses such loans as political weapons. Countries are urged to encourage private capitalist involvement in the economies, playing down the role of state-owned enterprises and economic institutions and encouraging foreign capitalist investment. Although economic structures of many of the African states facilitate the ever-increasing penetration of capitalist exploitation, countries whose development strategy is aimed at restricting the activities of the TNCs and private enterprise within the

national economies are pressured by the IMF to change such orientation Many African heads of state have remarked on this blackmail policy of the IMF as well as its standard dosage of devaluation, which hits the poorest section of the people the hardest.

Africa faces great challenges ahead. None are more critical than maintaining and consolidating political and economic independence. There is a way out of the poverty, illiteracy, food crisis, low levels of income and development, high debts and continued economic dependence on the imperialist countries. It lies in intensifying the struggle for the New Economic Order. In the long term Africa's problems can only be resolved by opting for the socialist road of development.

THE OAU — The 19th Summit, at last

Attempts by the Reagan Administration and its dollar allies in Africa to wreck the 19th summit of the OAU, and with it the very existence of the organisation, finally came to nothing. The summit was successfully convened and concluded in Addis Ababa between the 8th and 12th of June. It is worth reminding ourselves that the two previous attempts to convene the summit in Tripoli, Libya, in August and November, 1982, were both sabotaged. The culprits were Morocco and the so-called "moderate African states" with the open backing of the US Administration. (See *African Communist,* Nos 92, 93)

In the event, both US and Moroccan policies suffered decisive defeats as the deliberations and resolutions of the 19th Summit make clear.

Morocco, once more, tried to marshal a boycott lobby of the summit when it became known that the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) under the leadership of POLISARIO, would take up its legitimate seat. This was precisely the tactic that Moroccan colonialism had used to torpedo the Tripoli summits. This time round, however, the SADR's mature political approach in the interest of African unity, gave a decisive rebuff to these attempts. The SADR statement to the summit said:

> "In consideration of the interest of Africa and in conformity with our desire to contribute to the reinforcement of Africa's unity, which is threatened by Moroccan expansionism backed by the United States, the SADR, as a member of the OAU, has decided voluntarily and temporarily not to participate in the 19th Summit of the OAU which is being held in Addis Ababa."

This was not the only setback suffered by Morocco. The summit adopted a comprehensive plan for "a peaceful and fair referendum of self-determination by the people of Western Sahara under the auspices of the UN and the OAU." The final resolution underscored the comprehensive political victory of the SADR over Morocco. It rejected the Moroccan position that Algeria, rather than the POLISARIO, is the main force in the regional conflict. It urged both POLISARIO and Morocco to enter into direct negotiations for a ceasefire and preparation for the referendum, thus defeating Morocco's long-held position that it would not negotiate directly with POLISARIO. It was directed that the referendum he held within the next six months under the auspices of a joint UN-OAU peace-keeping force, and without "any administrative or military constraint". This last proviso effectively met the demand by POLISARIO that all Moroccan administrative and military personnel should leave the territory during the referendum.

US policy received a hammering in several key areas. The outgoing chairman, President Moi of Kenya, attacked the Reagan Administration's linkage policy in regard to Namibia's independence. "We see no valid connection, direct or indirect, between these two issues", he declared. Furthermore, he continued, "the linkage proposals amounted to a series of delaying tactics which we deplore vehemently". "We find it contradictory", he said, "that attention in Western quarters is focussed on the Cuban troops present in Angola at the invitation of the Angolan government, rather than on the aggressive South African forces occupying Angolan territory...". Washington's "constructive engagement" policy with the Pretoria regime was roundly condemned by the resolution which stated that the policy "has reinforced the latter's (i.e. Pretoria's) intransigence and encouraged it to engage in brutal repression domestically and shameless acts of aggression against the independent states of southern Africa."

The Washington-Tel Aviv Axis also came under fire as the resolution on the Middle East urged all member states not to resume diplomatic relations with Israel — a sharp reminder to Mobuto of Zaire that he was working against the mainstream of African policy with his political, diplomatic and military collaboration with Israel. The summit reaffirmed its demand for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Lebanon and all other occupied Arab territory and its unequivocal support for the struggle of the Palestinian people for national self-determination and independent statehood. Recognising the Regan Administration's southern Africa policy of support and collaboration with the Pretoria racists the 19th summit reaffirmed its full support for the liberation forces and called for increasing support for SWAPO of Namibia and the African National Congress of South Africa.

In summing up the urgent priorities facing Africa, the OAU's new chairman, President Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia, listed three — the liberation and independence of Namibia and South Africa, the independence of the Western Sahara and the implementation of the Lagos plan of action for Africa's economic revival. His final address was a broadside against those bent on wrecking the OAU:

> "We have proved that we Africans, whenever we are faced with a difficult situation, gather together and all work together to solve our common problems. We have also shamed those anti-African groups who have been working on different kinds of sabotage for the downfall of our organisation. We have proved that Africa can have one voice and that is the voice of 500 million Africans."

Long live African unity, solidarity and anti-imperialism.

SENEGAL — A Fraudulent Election

Senegal has been much praised by Western governments and the bourgeois press for the willingness of its government to allow numerous parties to participate in elections there. A recent communication to *The African Communist* from comrade Séman Pathé Gueye, an additional member of the Political Bureau of the Parti de l'Indépendence et du Travail du Sénégal (PIT), throws a sharp light on the reality behind this facade of democracy.

When an election was called in February 1983, the PIT faced a difficult decision whether to participate or not. Having emerged from a long period of illegality only eighteen months before, the Party's organisation was far from ready for an election campaign. It had been subject to a sustained campaign of vilification by the press, who presented it as a mysterious and sinister organisation under foreign control. There was every reason to doubt whether the elections would in fact be fairly conducted.

The PIT nevertheless decided to contest the election, since this would give a unique opportunity to speak directly to the people and to publicise the Party's programme and policies. This decision proved to be fully justified. The election campaign brought the message of the PIT to many sections of the population who had not previously received it, especially in the rural areas. Large numbers of members were recruited, branches were set up in areas where none had existed before, and in some places the organisation of the government party was thrown into disarray by defections from its ranks. In looking back on the election campaign, the leadership of the PIT was therefore able to characterise the results as positive, leading to lasting gains in the level of Party organisation and the level of popular political consciousness.

The principal negative aspect of the campaign was the failure of the PIT's efforts to create a popular front among the opposition parties. Much confusion was caused by the proliferation of more or less left-wing organisations, several claiming to be Marxist. Particularly damaging were the diversionary activities of the "Democratic League", a clique of renegades who broke away from the PIT a few years ago, whose importance the government press systematically exaggerated.

The results announced by the Ministry of the Interior were grossly falsified, with the PIT the principal target of a whole range of fraudulent practices. These ranged from impersonation of dead voters by officials of the government party to blatant alteration of the figures by those in charge of the polls. In certain districts, returning officers showed the PIT as receiving no votes at all, although both PIT candidates and PIT members were on the voters' roll and cast their votes. In some areas, PIT votes were transferred en bloc to the "Democratic League" on the pretext that it is the officially recognised Marxist party. By such methods, the PIT was completely excluded from representation in the National Assembly.

The PIT is confident that by going to such lengths, the government has exposed itself in the eyes of the people and has increased its isolation from the people. The Central Committee of the PIT has pledged itself to reinforce the new links forged with the masses during the election campaign, to translate these into new organisational forms and thus to create the means of bringing about change in Senegal.

HUMANITY YEARNS FOR PEACE AND LIFE

Report on the Prague Peace Assembly by Ahmed Azad

To prevent a nuclear holocaust is the most burning question facing all humanity. This is because the Reagan administration continues to poison international relations, believes in a first strike nuclear policy and, against all the evidence, holds that a limited nuclear war between the USA and the USSR is an option which in certain circumstances must be seriously considered. To save our planet from destruction requires the unity in action of all those who love peace and life, irrespective of class, colour, sex, ideological or religious beliefs. An exceptionally significant contribution to this unity was made by the World Assembly for Peace and Life and Against Nuclear War which took place in Prague, Czechoslovakia from June 21-28, 1983.

It was the broadest and most representative international gathering of its kind ever held. A very wide spectrum of peace fighters and peace defenders were represented. There were 3,625 participants from 132 countries which included 97 new anti-war movements from around the globe, 119 international organisations, the United Nations and some of its agencies. 40% of the delegates were from the developing countries, 40% from the highly developed capitalist countries and 20% from the socialist countries. Amongst them were Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, radicals, centrists, clergymen, fighters for national liberation and Communists.

To enable such a large and diverse gathering to live in congenial conditions and create a pleasant working atmosphere was a daunting task.

However, the Czechoslovak Preparatory Committee, under the chairmanship of Professor Traunicek, did an outstanding job. The delegates were housed, fed and offered all the necessary facilities to participate in open discussion at bilateral and multi-lateral levels. Any reasonable request was dealt with promptly and courteously. Of couse some mistakes were made, some requests could not be met and minor irritants were felt. But any such blemishes were completely overshadowed by the efficient and enthusiastic organisation. Above all it was the open-hearted generous way in which the people of the host country responded to the preparations for the Assembly which guaranteed the fine working and living conditions. The entire cost of the delegates' stay and that of more than 400 foreign journalists was met by the voluntary contributions of millions of children, women and men of Czechoslovakia. More than 60 million Czechoslovak crowns were donated. For this children throughout the country did voluntary work such as collecting waste materials for recycling and in addition they made beautiful gifts for their guests. Prague and all other cities, towns and villages were festooned with flags and posters depicting the people's deep desire for peace and life. For months before the Assembly the mass media gave information and data about the preparatory work and the world-wide struggle for peace. Every weekend the most popular children's television programme had a special section devoted to the Assembly. It is no exaggeration to say that the success of the Assembly was due in large measure to the voluntary and enthusiastic participation of the people of Czechoslovakia.

The opening ceremony of the Assembly was a most impressive event. There was a deeply moving dialogue between two children — a boy and a girl — and their parents, about the causes and resulting devastation of wars and the reasons why we have to do all we can to prevent a nuclear war; and hundreds of children welcomed the delegates with flowers and little cards proclaiming their desire for peace and life. Another highlight was the opening address of Gustav Husak, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and President of Czechoslovakia. In a calm, dispassionate manner Husak stressed the great significance of the struggle for world peace. He pointed out that it is imperialism which pursues a policy of confrontation and aggression, whilst the socialist countries are assiduously working to establish firmly the principles of peaceful co-existence and detente. Moreover he showed that unlike US imperialism the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries have consistently put forward various initiatives in favour of peace and life.

Romesh Chandra, President of the World Peace Council, made an eloquent and impassioned appeal for the unity of all peace-loving forces. He emphasised the importance of linking the struggle against nuclear war with the struggle of the people for national liberation, for a life free from the scourge of racism, hunger and intolerable living conditions.

After the opening ceremony, the Assembly divided into 11 commissions or dialogues which dealt with various aspects of the danger and threat of nuclear war, local wars, national liberation and on concrete action at the local, regional, national and international levels to prevent our planet from being blown up. A number of dialogues broke up into sub-sections. One of these was dialogue 10, "The danger of war and the problems of the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America." After a plenary session this dialogue broke up into 4 sections. In the Africa section great attention was paid to the threat posed to peace in Africa and the world by the aggressive policies of the Pretoria terrorists. John Nkadimeng spoke at this session on behalf of the African National Congress. In the final document support and solidarity were expressed for the ANC and SWAPO and all states were called on to "render them financial and other assistance in their just struggle against the racist regime in South Africa." Support was also expressed for the frontline states. Following the dialogues, groups with special interests such as Parliamentarians, religious believers, journalists, writers and trade unionists met and shared their experiences.

Which side is to blame?

In both the dialogues and the interest groups a small minority of participants held to the view that both the USA and the USSR are equally responsible for the arms race and for the present international situation. Some of them even asked the Soviet Union to disarm unilaterally. These views received very little support because the overwhelming majoirity of participants recognised that it is US imperialism which is responsible for the escalation of the arms race and the present dangerous international situation, and that the Soviet Union and its allies have always had to respond in some meaningful way to the arms build-up of the imperialist powers. Many speakers also pointed out that such a position fully accords with the wishes of imperialism since it absolves them of their crimes. The point was also made that the rivers of blood which flow in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean are the result of the aggressive manoeuvres and conspiracies of imperialism and not of the socialist countries; that the Soviet Union and its allies have consistently put forward initiatives and proposals to improve the situation, but US imperialism has led its allies in rejecting all such proposals.

At the present time US imperialism threatens the world with a nuclear war by insisting on the deployment of Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles in Europe. Pershing 2 missiles fired from West Germany will take six minutes to get to Moscow, 40 seconds to Berlin and 3 minutes to Prague. So who is and who is not responsible is not an academic question but one which directly affects the way in which millions upon millions of people are going to be organised and mobilised for peace and against nuclear war. Delegates were convinced that it would be ludicrous to expect the Soviet Union to face an aggressive foe naked and defenceless. After all, the self-admitted primary aim of the Reagan Administration is to reverse the gains of socialism — and a frightening number of their theorists believe that to achieve this aim they would be more than justified in destroying the first socialist state in the world, the bastion of peace, freedom, democracy, national liberation and socialism.

The feelings of the participants were most vividly expressed at the closing session of the Assembly when a Peace Appeal was adopted by acclaim.

Mammoth Rally

During the Assembly a mammoth peace rally of 200,000 people was held in the Old Town Hall Square of Prague. Here once more the people of Czechoslovakia demonstrated their love and desire for peace and life. One of the most moving moments came when Fenner Brockway, at the age of 94, spoke. His youthful optimism and deep commitment to peace, freedom and national independence inspired everyone.

During the Assembly a Solidarity Forum was organised which was addressed by Yassar Arafat, Alfred Nzo, Echeverra (the former President of Mexico) and speakers from all over the world. Alfred Nzo, on behalf of the oppressed people of South Africa and the ANC, expressed full support and solidarity for all those fighting against imperialism, racism and neo-colonialism. This solidarity forum was a dramatic expression of the common struggle that we are all waging against the forces of imperialism and reaction.

A new initiative at such gatherings was the setting up of a women's centre. 25% of the participants were women. This centre was a hub of activity, debates, discussions, songs and dances. At its opening Viney Burrows, a black American actress, produced and dramatised the life and struggles of Nelson and Winnie Mandela. Everyone who was privileged to see this superb performance was moved to tears and came away with a deeper knowledge and appreciation of our struggle in South Africa. The closing ceremony of this centre was also an emotional occasion with songs, dances and poems by a Soviet poet and actor. It ended with all those present holding hands in the air whilst singing *We Shall Overcome*. There was also a successful youth and student village attended by over 700 participants from all over the world.

A dramatic and brilliant cry for peace was heard at the concert organised by the hosts. Every person who attended that concert came out with a feeling of great revulsion against war and a deep commitment to peace. A Vietnamese woman doctor, in a calm, dispassionate voice and with the help of slides projected on a huge screen, described the horrific effects of the chemical war which the US unleashed on Vietnam. We saw pictures of the most badly deformed babies, some of whom were only blobs with hands and feet permanently joined together. Even today Vietnamese women are giving birth to these deformed babies. In the United States children of army personnel who served in Vietnam are also suffering the consequences. Two survivors of the bombing of Hiroshima made an impassioned plea for world peace.

In spite of these positive features, sections of the Western media distorted the whole nature and character of the Assembly. For example, the BBC always found time to give publicity to some dissidents and other disgruntled elements — those who were more interested in criticising the socialist countries than in finding common ground for our common cause of peace. A tiny minority who were observers or participants at the Assembly spent more time meeting Czech "dissidents" in the most provocative fashion than they did at the Assembly. As Jim Layzell, a British (non-communist) participant wrote:

> "The pathetic attempt by a few observers, in collusion with British television crews, to wreck or divert the Assembly, while it manufactured a phoney news item for British television, rebounded on its instigators with a vengeance. The British delegation condemned their actions and the remarks made by some of the so-called dissidents that Mrs Thatcher was a fine leader and that her attack on the Falklands was correct, dispelled any illusion they may have had on the so-called dissident groups' attitude to the peace campaign." (*Morning Star*, 20 July, 1983).

The lesson for us is clear. We have to be on our guard against the bourgeois mass media. They are not interested in telling the truth about the struggle for peace, about our own struggle and that of other oppressed and exploited peoples and about the socialist countries. They see as one of their main aims the discrediting of the growing powerful peace movement in Western Europe and North America, the peace initiatives of the Soviet Union and its allies, and the struggle for national independence free from the dictates of imperialism and neo-colonialism.

The open free discussion in which the widest variety of views were expressed gave a firm and resounding rebuff to those who claimed that the Prague Assembly was going to be a mere mouthpiece of the socialist countries. After every view had been expressed — even the minority viewpoints were reflected in the final documents — the consensus was clear. Together with the socialist countries the peace-loving forces of the world can and must prevent a nuclear catastrophe. One of our immediate tasks must be to do all we can to prevent the installation of the Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles in Western Europe.

For those who hate Czechoslovakia because it is a peace-loving socialist country, the successful outcome of the Assembly was a tragedy. But for the participants it was proof of the open, honest, enthusiastic way in which the hosts prepared the Assembly. Credit for the successful holding of the Assembly should also go to Edyth Ballantine, of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and to Romesh Chandra, who was once more elected President of the World Peace Council — a fitting tribute to a person who has done so much to demonstrate the inseparable link between the struggle for world peace and that of national liberation and social progress.

The Assembly was a powerful experience for all participants. We learnt more about each other's problems, about how to be more innovative in organising peace marches, rallies and demonstrations. Above all, we became more convinced than ever that by the united action of all those fighting for peace, we can prevent a nuclear war. Humanity's yearning for Peace and Life must become a reality.

J. B. MARKS, COMMUNIST, MAN OF THE PEOPLE, FIGHTER FOR FREEDOM

Extracts from a speech by JOE SLOVO recorded at a SACTU seminar on the life and times of J. B. Marks held at Morogoro in March 1983 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Marks' birth on March 21, 1903.

J.B. Marks was truly a towering man, and not only in physical appearance. If he commanded respect, it was not won through fear or bullying or arrogance, but through the very opposite qualities of human warmth, gentleness and charm. He was a true example of how a leader should be. We have had many leaders in our history, both past and present, whom we can admire, but JB belongs to that select group whom we can love as well. We have already heard from some of the veterans in exile of the terrible hardships in the Tanzanian bush at Kongwa, and they indicated to you that there was a time when all seemed lost. It was JB above all who gave them the will and the stamina to go on. Those who lived through that period know that when things became really bad it was JB who was the one who came to face the music. Another quality of his, which unfortunately is only too rare in leaders, is that he listened to and even believed he could learn from the rank and file. He never used that catchphrase of bourgeois armies — "You are a soldier, yours is not to reason why, yours is just to do and die." He understood perhaps more than anyone that without people's politics, there can be no people's army, and without a people's army there can be no people's war.

JB yearned for home, and never allowed the urgency of working to get back home to be blunted by the lure of exile safety and comfort. I personally cherish my last memory of JB at home. It was about 4 am on one of those gloriously crisp early winter days in Johannesburg and JB was looking sad and even more like Paul Robeson than ever. He was wearing an oversized army greatcoat, standing on a street corner in Newclare, where he was the area's best known figure, in fact often referred to as the Mayor of Newclare. Ruth and I had come to pick him up. JB and I were to be driven into our exile as a result of a decision that had been taken three days earlier by the Central Committee of the Party and by the working committee of the ANC. When we approached JB on that Newclare street corner, he greeted us and asked if we could hold on a minute as he wanted to go back home, a few blocks away, to collect a copy of Lenin's *State and Revolution*. I said to him: "But JB, there are plenty of those where we are heading". He said no, there was only one copy like the one he had; it had been inscribed by his teachers at the Lenin School where he had been taught his Marxism almost thirty years before.

When we reached Botswana and eventually arrived at Francistown, I saw another side of JB; his capacity to cope with racist barbarism, not just with anger but with ridiculing laughter, of which he was a master. Botswana had just achieved the first stage of its independence and a law had been passed lifting the colour bar in all hotels. We went to the Grand Hotel in Francistown where a white lady manager stood at the reception. There I was, younger than I am now and JB alrady quite a mature man in age standing next to me. I asked if we could please have a room. The manager took a key off one of the pigeon holes and said: "Number eight for you, and your 'boy' can go with the other travellers' 'boys'." JB just stood there, in his full six foot three, looked at her, and started laughing. Then taking me by the hand he said: "Let's go, Daddy". We went to see the district commissioner, Steenkamp, and kicked up a fuss. Perhaps for the first time in the history of Southern Africa a white and a black slept in the same room in a hotel, and JB enjoyed this victory immensely.

The organisation had chartered a Dakota to take 28 of our MK cadres (including JB and myself) from Francistown to Dar es Salaam. A short while before our departing a thin, energetic young man asked if it was possible to get a seat on our plane as he wanted to join the Frelimo forces. JB immediately took the decision that one of our cadres should be taken off the plane to make room for the Frelimo recruit. This recruit who travelled with us (and he remembers it very well and tells the story today) is

Comrade President Samora Machel. We were just about to fly off when another group rushed up and made another urgent request on behalf of someone who wanted to join Swapo. We took another of our cadres off and flew this man to Dar. His name was Peter Nanyembi, and he is at present the commander in chief of PLAN. (Since these words were spoken Comrade Nanyembi was tragically killed in Southern Angola).

Instruments of History

I would like now to reflect on moments in our history when JB was one of the chief actors. It is only in Hollywood films that history is made just by individual stars. Nevertheless, political stars like JB often become history's instruments, and in turn they leave their own special and personal imprint on histoty. I want to mention a handful of instances when history chose JB as one of its chief instruments.

I begin with the tale of two strikes which are among the most important and definitive events in the first half of this century in South Africa; the 1922 white miners' strike and the 1946 black miners' strike. 1922 was objectively a strike to entrench white workers' privileges. Although it was drowned in blood, the 1924 Pact government institutionalised the division of the black and white working classes with white workers becoming the political appendage of the white ruling class. 1946 was the turn of the black miners under the leadership of JB. This was also a strike drowned in blood but it shook the system to its very foundations. It gave new meaning and direction to our revolution. After this event even the moderate blacks among the middle classes became less docile and withdrew from the dummy institution — the Native Representative Council. The strike also made a powerful impact on the emerging leaders of the Youth League such as Mandela, Tambo, Sisulu and Lembede. Together with communist veterans like Kotane and JB, they helped to transform the ANC from its early posture of cap-in-hand nationalism to an organisation which became the militant organ of revolutionary nationalism. The challenge by the black miners, the most exploited section of our black working class, had an equally dramatic impact on our ruling classes. The upsurge of black workers' strength and the potential which it demonstrated for the destruction of the whole capitalist-racist framework, was one of the key factors in the emerging pattern of extreme racist reaction reflected in the Nationalist victory in 1948.

The 1946 black miners' strike was an event which fundamentally transformed all the constituents of what we today call the Congress

Alliance. It created a receptivity from the up and coming militant Congress leaders towards working with Communists. After all, they had seen that it was the Party, in the person of individuals like JB, which was responsible for organising not only the mineworkers but most of the other black unions. It was the party that stood by the mineworkers and faced a sedition trial in the process. It was the mineworkers' strike that began to prepare the field in which the seeds were sown for the growth of the present alliance between the Party and the national movement.

JB devoted his life's energy to sharpening the three most important instruments of the black proletariat — the vanguard party, the mass national movement and the trade union organisation. JB was not just a leader of the Mineworkers' Union, but had worked hard to create progressive trade union co-ordinating centres. In 1945 he was elected President of the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions, and at the 1945 annual national conference of the Party he led a group of delegates in an unsuccessful attempt to get support for the idea that a separate black *national* trade union federation be created. It was perhaps clearer to JB than to most delegates at this conference that the white-dominated Trades and Labour Council would in the end frustrate rather than encourage the organisation of black workers. When JB argued in support of this idea, he said:

> "The African is conscious of the need for working class solidarity but it seems impossible to achieve when the attitude of most white workers is as antagonistic as it is today".

I spent a lot of time with JB, particularly when we left the country, and I know that he was hopeful that the time would come when black and white workers would stand together. But to his credit, he understood earlier than most that this would not happen as a result of a moral somersault by white workers, that it could only come about as the result of the very power of the black organisations in the industrial field. JB understood this, and history has vindicated the group of delegates led by him at the 1945 conference of the Party.

Enemy of Reformism

Another thing JB understood clearly was that there is nothing inherently revolutionary in strikes or in trade unions. He did not believe that from the mass organisation of workers there would spontaneously spring a revolutionary ideology. He had read and understood Lenin's fundamental work on this question *What is to be Done?* He knew how backward, reformist, and social democratic was the political party that had been fathered by the best organised trade union movement in the world, the British trade union movement. I have no doubt that JB would have shaken his head in a gesture of real incomprehension at the current attempts, made mainly by university intellectuals, to use the trade union movement to create a workers' political party. We know this is in part an intent, which objectively they share with the racists, of destroying the SACP. In all their arguments for a need for a working class political movement, there is not a single mention of the Communist Party. For example in the speech which Forster read (and I use the word 'read' advisedly) at the Fosatu conference when he dealt with the need for a working class organisation, nowhere does he even acknowledge the existence of the organisation which inspired JB to become what he did in the workers' and trade union field.

Marxism-Leninism had taught JB that if the key to the struggle was the working class, then this class had to be led by the vanguard political party which alone could bring the science of revolutionary struggle to the working class. Only in this way could the working class be transformed from a class in itself to a class for itself. This is why JB was above all a communist and an activist at all levels of the SACP, both in its legal and illegal days. After 1950 when the Party was reconstructed underground, following its unjustified dissolution, JB was there. He already had some experience of underground work when he was organising the Mineworkers' Union, at a time when the government had used the war issue as a pretext for the notorious war measure 1245 which, for all practical purposes, made the organisation of mine workers illegal. It was made an offence for any person to assemble on mine property or to distribute any pamphlets on mine property, and it was in these hard conditions that the union was organised. And when the Party went underground we had a man who already had some experience in underground organisation.

In the underground period JB was elected to the Central Committee and later became Chairman of the Party at its sixth underground conference in 1962. Between 1952 and 1962 the Party organised an underground conference almost every two years. Representatives came from every major urban centre in South Africa and at each conference a new Central Committee was elected. JB was always anxious that we did not use excuses to suppress democracy, and he was amongst those who even under the most difficult security conditions insisted on the maximum democratic life within the Party. It was at the sixth conference over which JB presided that perhaps the most historic document in the history of the SACP was debated and adopted — the Party programme, *The Road to South African Freedom.*

The programme represented an important moment in the growth of the Party and the maturing of its ideology. It is now over 20 years old and inevitably needs updating because of the enormous changes which have taken place in this period. Nevertheless its main thesis has undoubtedly stood the test of time. This is so particularly in relation to its characterisation of the social structure as akin to internal colonialism, or colonialism of a special type. You will not find this concept in the works of the founding fathers of Marxism. Our Party applied in South Africa the concept which Lenin had expressed when opening the very Party school that JB had attended. He told the students at what was then called the University of the Peoples of the East that Marxism was not a dogma to be repeated in parrot fashion and in accordance with some single model. He said explicitly: "The answer to some of your problems you will not find in any communist book. . ."

Our Contribution to Marxism

In South Africa our objective conditions forced us to add some paragraphs to the communist book, to enrich the storehouse of real Marxism which is situated in the growth and development of revolutionary struggle and not in university libraries.

What is the concept of internal colonialism? Briefly, the programme emphasises that on one level South Africa is an independent, capitalist state with class divisions both within the black community and within the white community. There are white workers, a white middle class, black workers, a black middle class. On another level, the heights of economic power and political power are monopolised by a ruling class coming from the white group only, whereas all blacks, no matter what class they come from, suffer disability and social, political and economic disadvantage by virtue of the colour of their skin. In other words, blacks in South Africa have a status similar to a colonial people. But the ruling class, instead of being situated in some foreign metropolis, is situated inside the country itself. We know that after the Act of Union and the Statute of Westminster which gave sovereignty to an all-white regime the status of blacks did not change. The removal of direct imperial rule did not affect the status of blacks who remained a doubly-exploited people, living under a system of internal colonialism.

Why is it so important to be clear about the question of internal colonialism? This is not just an exercise in abstract theoretical conceptualisation; it leads us in a straight line to the essence of our revolutionary practice, to what our programme concretely regards as the main content of the present stage of our revolution — liberation from national oppression.

But some people on the "left" start shouting: What about the class struggle? It has always been the fate of leaders like JB to be shot at from both sides. He was accused by anti-communists of being interested in the class struggle only, and not in the national struggle. The Gang of Eight that was expelled some time after the Morogoro Conference said precisely this. Simultaneously he faced accusations from the ultra-left, repeated to this day, that he was interested only in national struggle, and that the Communist Party was just dragging along as the tail of the ANC.

The first milestone on the path to discovery of knowledge is the asking of the right question. If you start by asking whether we face a class struggle or a national struggle, you will find yourself swimming in a sea of thick intellectual syrup. The real question to ask is what is the relationship between these two ingredients which are so inextricably and dialectically bound up. We must also understand what we mean when we talk about class struggle. Do we understand this to be just the struggle of the workers against the bosses for higher wages and better working conditions? Any of you who have read, as JB did very well, *What is to be Done?*, will remember that Lenin said that the struggle between the workers and the bosses for higher wages and better working conditions is far from being the highest form of class struggle. The main task of the workers, he said, was to fight against Tsarist autocracy in alliance with any other groups or classes (including in the case of Russia the liberal bourgeiosie) who were prepared to fight, even if in a limited way, against the Tsarist autocracy. That was the main class task of the Russian proletariat, and there can be no doubt that the main content of the class struggle in South Africa today is the fight against racist autocracy.

The working class must maintain its position as the leading force in the fight against the racist autocracy, and in so doing it will be expressing at the highest possible level its class interests. When the police shoot black workers who are engaged in a strike, and they shoot down black children who are demonstrating against Bantu education, the one bullet is not marked "class struggle" and the other bullet not marked "national struggle". The students and the workers face a common foe.

Connected with this is the problem of the stages of our revolution, which is also dealt with in the programme. This is another area in which the Party programme is often distorted. There is no Chinese Wall between the stages of our revolution. Even though we may say that the main content of this stage is the fight for a national democratic revolution, we are not saying that the problem of social emancipation is something that will be postponed until we have achieved some vague form of people's power. It is clear from the programme that what we stand for is continuing revolution. What will happen after the ANC is in Pretoria will depend on which class plays the dominant role *now* at *this* stage of the fight for liberation. It is at this stage that we need not just a mass national movement, but also an independent class party of the workers which plays a significant role in the liberation alliance. If we wait for the working class to organise itself only after the liberation flag is raised in Pretoria, we will be in the same unfortunate position as 90% of Africa found itself in after independence.

Even though at the moment we give emphasis to the national democratic revolution, it is also at this stage that we must continue to get across to the most advanced sections of the workers an understanding of the ideology of Marxism Leninism and an understanding that, in the long run, racism cannot be overthrown without the destruction of its foundation, which is capitalism. We cannot postpone the spreading of these ideas until we have achieved the so-called first stage of revolutionary advance. They must be spread now.

Recognising this (and despite the fact that he became a very prominent leader of the national movement) JB at all times jealously guarded the independent existence of the Party and its right to organise itself and to spread its ideology among the people. In doing this it was not acting in competition with the national movement, but in support of it on the questions where we shared common ground. At all times he insisted that we go beyond the immediate issues and open the eyes of the people, including members of the ANC, to the very nature of the system, its foundation and what the ultimate solution should be.

After the Rivonia disaster both the Party's and the ANC's internal machinery were smashed and no structures existed inside for a time. All that was left were groups of comrades and leaders who had been sent out of the country. In this situation it was JB together with another great beacon of our revolution, Yusuf Dadoo, who played the most important role in saving the Party and re-establishing its structures and they did this under the most difficult conditions.

JB's commitment to the national movement is well known. He became one of its most important leaders and he did so because there was no doubt that at this stage of our revolution you could not be a communist without at the same time supporting the platform of revolutionary nationalism. In 1950 he became president of the Transvaal ANC, in the teeth of opposition from certain people because he was a communist. In his capacity as president he was among the three persons who publicly called the May 1st strike: the salvo that was to trigger off a decade of mass struggle the like of which South Africa had not experienced before. Together with Walter Sisulu, he represented the ANC on the Planning Council which organised the Defiance Campaign of 1952. And here we see another quality of JB — that he was the kind of leader who always led from the front. He did not expect the rank and file to do what he was not prepared to do himself. Together with Kotane and a number of other leaders he was in the first batch to defy.

The Morogoro Conference

In 1969 he presided over one of the most important conferences in the history of the ANC — the Morogoro Conference. It was an extremely critical moment. As chairman, JB was confronted by a democratically elected but at the same time very angry assembly of men and women who had lost confidence in many members of the National Executive Committee. We do not believe that history depends on one individual, but in the case of this particular conference it is true to say that it was Uncle JB who saved the day.

I want to say a few words about the Morogoro conference. People tend to think about it loosely and for every person Morogoro seems to have a different meaning. Most people who talk about the Morogoro Conference tend to concentrate mainly on the integration of non-African revolutionaries into the external mission of the ANC. It is true that this was one of the key demands of the rank and file of MK and it was very hotly debated. Quite a few of the then leaders of the NEC who have since shown their true colours were opposed to this move. I well recall the remarks of another comrade who needs to be remembered, Flag Boshielo, who became the army commissar. He was one of the finest MK cadres I have ever known, and one of the most dedicated communists. On this question at Morogoro of the incorporation of Indians, Coloureds and revolutionary whites into the national movement, I remember him standing up and saying:

> "We have heard from so-and-so and so-and-so who say they are not racists, that they are not tribalist. They say they would love to be in the same organisation as Coloureds, Indians and democratic whites, but that very unfortunately the people are not ready for it yet".

Flag paused, and JB looked at him in a loving way, and Flag continued:

> "Comrade Chair, it is not the people who are not ready, it is this one and this one and this one. They must stop using the people as an excuse for their own backwardness. They do not know the people. I know the people".

Flag was a man in the JB mould. We know what the decision was and we know that the enemies under the same colour eventually found themselves isolated and in the enemy's camp, some of them working for Matanzima.

But Morogoro was more than this question alone. In the first place Morogoro asserted the right of the rank and file to have a say as to who would lead them. JB understood and sympathised with this demand, as he also understood that often resistance under the guise of security to the democratic process was a device used by some to hold on to the reins of power. Morogoro also proclaimed that we must devote the bulk of our resources and efforts to work inside the country. At the time the ANC's underground structures were virtually non-existent and MK had not fired a single shot on South African soil.

Out of the Morogoro Conference there emerged the Revolutionary Council and the Strategy and Tactics document of the ANC, the only all-round programme the ANC has adopted. In its essence this document, like the Party programme, remains valid to this day; it is an outstanding example of the ideology of revolutionary nationalism. And lastly, comrades, immediately after the Morogoro Conference JB played a prominent part in the official meeting between representatives of the NEC of the ANC and representatives of the Central Committee of the Party to discuss our common contribution to the struggle and our closer collaboration from then on in a single attempt to overthrow the racist regime. Looking back on it comrades, it could be said that there were moments at that Morogoro Conference when the very future of our whole movement seemed to be in jeopardy. But it was JB's skill as chairman and the greatness of Comrade President Oliver Tambo (who was then acting president) which pulled us through and laid the basis for what we are today.

An internationalist

JB made a major world impact in 1969 when he presided over one of the sessions of the very last meeting of the international communist movement in Moscow. JB, like all of us, felt sadness because of the continuing impact of backward nationalism not only in situations like ours but also in some communist movements and even in parts of the socialist world. In his role as chairman, he had to deal with difficult situations involving prominent international figures which he did with his customary firmness, sincerity and adherence to democratic principles.

JB was an internationalist not just by conviction, not just by ideology; he was an internationalist by his nature. He really hated racism, tribalism and any form of regionalism. He detested the kind of nationalism represented by Jomo Kenyatta, a man who had attended the Lenin School with JB. JB believed that to lead people in a struggle for liberation you have to be a liberated person yourself and JB was just that; he was truly a liberated person.

Comrades, one final remark about JB. Politics for him was serious, his central passion. But JB also loved life in all its forms. The joy of life coursed through JB's veins and you could really spend spirited times with him away from the struggle and away from politics, but however great the fun he never allowed relaxed diversion to interfere with what his life was really all about — the endless striving for the liberation of all mankind.

* * *

We hold aloft the glistening banner of the World Commune to be, when the class war shall have been for ever stamped out, when mankind shall no longer cower under the bludgeon of the oppressor, when the necessaries and amenities of life, the comfort and the culture, the honour and the power, shall be to him who toils and not to him who exploits, when none shall be called master and none servant, but all shall be fellow workers in common.

Manifesto of the Communist Party of South Africa adopted at its founding conference in Cape Town, 1921.

Art and Revolution in South Africa

THE THEATRE OF GIBSON KENTE

by R.K.

If Athol Fugard is the best known South African playwright in the outside world, Gibson Kente is without doubt the best known and most popular playwright inside South Africa. The purpose of this essay is partly to introduce Kente and his work to those who do not know about him but more importantly to explore the particular contradictions of which he is an exemplum, contradictions which are by no means confined to theatre and the arts. They are social contradictions, which I wish to take up and pursue in order to show how these contradictions find expression in the work itself — and not just in the content or themes of the work but in its very artistic nature. The contradictions in brief stem from the conflict between Kente's class position as an entrepreneur and his membership of an oppressed national group.

This is how Kente himself described his early career in an interview:

> "I suppose then I'll have to give you an insight into my background and how I got to being involved with songs and writing scripts. I started this at school in Lovedale. Then I left for East London and formed a very popular group, the Symphonic Five. All the songs were completely new. In '55 I came over here (i.e. the Witwatersrand) to Hofmeyr. I was doing social work. I formed up a group by the name of the Kente Choristers. 'Ngcwele ngcwele' was one of the products of that group. I was set off, man.
>
> "Then after that I left for the studios. I was a talent scout for Gallo. I did some writing for Miriam Makeba, the Manhatten Brothers, Letta Mbuli, and many others, like Thoko Shikuma. I spent another two years talent-scouting. Then I got bored with that. I wanted something more creative. I was tired of writing three chord sequences. I wanted to write songs that had weight. My first problem was to get hold of a script. Well, I ran from pillar to post, trying to get township people to write a script. Casey Motsisi was one of them. He just made promises but they never materialized. I decided just to sketch something on my own. That was the birth of *Manana, the Jazz-Prophet*.

> "By then I had not done any studies on stage work. I felt now before tackling *Sikalo* I had to have a bit of knowhow, about the stage and all that entails. I started buying books, mainly Stanislavsky, let us say Russian, French, English and American. When I tackled *Sikalo* I had some knowledge. At least I could make out stage right from stage left, downstage from upstage. Well, I'm still very busy with that."
>
> *S'ketsh'*, Summer 1972, pp 9-10

When Kente came to Johannesburg in 1955 the Union of Southern African Artists had already been formed to act as a trade union for the protection of black artists. Soon however it expanded its activities and began organizing 'Township Jazz' concerts. It became a promoting body and the emphasis began to shift from protection to employment — and ultimately to exploitation. In 1959 the organisation produced the famous and extremely influential musical, *King Kong,* with a script by Harry Bloom and music by Todd Matshikiza. Alan Paton and Krishna Shah's *Sponono* followed, Ben Masinga's *Back in Your Own Backyard,* Eugene O'Neill's *Emperor Jones,* Tagore's *King of the Dark Chamber* and Kente's own *Sikalo*.

How influential on Kente and black entertainment *King Kong* was can be gauged from the following remark of Kente himself when asked what the reason for the boom in African theatre in the late 1960s was:

> "The death of variety concerts made artists and writers look for a new medium and after the spectacular success of *King Kong* everybody in non-white showbiz switched to the musical and this is the climax of the switchover."
>
> — *Drum*, 9 April, 1967

In the early 1960s everything was measured by *King Kong*. By the early 1970s most aspiring commercial black playwrights were copying *Sikalo*.

There is little record of Kente's first play *Manana, the Jazz-Prophet,* and unlike his other plays it was never revived. The first performance of his second play *Sikalo* was in December, 1965. Union Artists, which had been formed by the Union of Southern African Artists to handle large-scale commercial shows like *King Kong,* presented the play at the Witwatersrand University Great Hall in July 1966. After a series of disagreements with the Union's management, including a complaint by the cast that the police were repeatedly called in to settle disputes, Kente and the cast left the Union and, in October 1967, Kente registered his company under the Companies Act.

From 1967 to 1973 Kente consolidated his artistic and economic independence with the production of two more successful musical plays, *Lifa* and *Zwi*. From 1973 to 1976 he came to be identified with the increased militancy of black theatre and art during that period and produced three politically oriented plays, *How Long, I Believe* and *Too Late*. In 1976 he was arrested and detained while working on the film of his play *How Long*. On his release the following year he returned to the stage with *Can You Take It?* followed by *The Load*. Kente then turned his hand to writing for South African television but last year, 1982, produced yet another play.

Apartheid and 'showbiz'

When Kente left Union Artists he achieved not only artistic but also economic independence. He became in fact a theatre entrepreneur. He, like the journalists of the time, referred to the entertainment arts as showbiz and he was in an identical position to those others who attempted to make a living, not by selling their labour to (white) employers but by establishing their own independent businesses in so-called black areas.

Conditions in the early 1960s favoured the *limited* increase of black business and trading. In all sectors except mining, black wages rose in real terms and most of their earnings were spent. During the 1950s trading and general dealers' stores owned by Africans had increased steadily in the Johannesburg area. In 1955 the African Chamber of Commerce had been established. By 1961 the Soweto businessman, Ephraim Tshabalala, owned three butcheries, a trading store, a cafe, a hairdressing saloon and a garage. He was to add to this the Eyethu Cinema. Richard Maponya in 1971 owned a general dealer's store, a butchery, a restaurant and a house with ten rooms.[1] When it is considered that Tshabalala and Maponya were two of the wealthiest men in Soweto it can be appreciated how limited the increase referred to above actually was.

However considering the small scale of commercial theatre development in South Africa, black or white, Kente's achievement is relatively impressive. In the 1970s his theatrical organization at times employed three large companies of actors, musicians, administrative and technical staff, drivers, publicity personnel and others. Kente owned vehicles adequate to transport his employees all over South Africa. In 1971 when his fortunes were at a relatively low ebb he was able to offer his wife a managerial position in his organization with a salary of R500 per month. In 1974 Kente was paying his average regular actors R50 per week while 'old hands' in important roles were getting up to and over R100 per week. By way of comparison the average wage in the better paid manufacturing sector for black workers in 1971 was under R57 per *month*.[2] Mary Twala, a Kente stalwart, was a despatch clerk in Swaziland before joining Kente in 1967. Her salary with Kente was three times what she had earned as a clerk.

One performance of a popular play like *How Long,* with tickets selling at R1.50 and an average attendance of 500, might gross R750. At some venues with large halls such as at Kwa Thema, Springs, takings might amount to R1,500 or more. A play might be performed between three and six times a week – sometimes, though exceptionally, even more. *How Long* has been known to be performed three times in one night. In the period 1973-6 Kente invariably had at least two productions on the road. It is thus possible that at a conservative estimate in an average week of four performances of each play his organization grossed in the region of R6,000. To put this in perspective, however, it is important to note that the weekly gross after paying the performers of the show, *Ipi Tombi,* at the Brian Brooke Theatre in central Johannesburg in 1974 was estimated to be R17,780. (*S'ketsh',* Summer, 1974/5, p.9)

Nevertheless Kente in objective terms along with others like Tshabalala and Maponya owned property and equipment, hired labour and derived from this a respectable surplus. To the extent that Kente's class position was characterized by these attributes, he was relatively more closely identified in function with the bourgeoisie proper (white) than with the proletariat proper (black).

However two factors fundamentally modified the relations Kente's class position would 'normally' i.e. in a strictly class society, produce. They were apartheid legislation and the particular nature of Kente's economic activity.

In 1963 a circular letter was sent to local authorities informing them that trading by blacks in areas outside the 'homelands' was not 'an inherent primary opportunity for them'. It urged local authorities not to grant licences, permission to build or expand and to discourage larger undertakings. This circular expressed exactly the nature of apartheid policy in this area. The phrase was 'primary opportunity' – in other words, an opportunity but not a primary one. A certain scope was to be afforded but this was strictly limited. It also made it clear, implicitly, that outside of these areas there was absolutely *no* opportunity for black businessmen except in the homelands.

In the early 1960s the performing arts were completely segregated by law. This brought policy vis-a-vis entertainment into line with that pertaining to trade and commerce. This legislation ended the control of black performing arts by Union Artists and other white-controlled companies and gave entrepreneurs like Kente (and Sam Mhangwane[3]) the opportunity to establish themselves independently. However at the same time it made it virtually impossible for them to expand their activities later on and maximize their profits by bringing their products to the affluent white audiences.

Thus apartheid legislation, while providing some scope to black entrepreneurs, set severe limitations on expansion.

Kente's economic activity differed howevei from that of, for example, Tshabalala and Maponya in one basic respect. Whereas the latter were involved in trade and commerce, Kente was involved in industry — the entertainment industry — in which production is the important element. What is more, the artistic product was largely culturally determined — as was the scale. Kente's national/cultural identity with his material, his actors and his audience facilitated the successful scale of the product. In competition with Kente non-African producers were at a distinct disadvantage. Yet for the same reason Kente was correspondingly less able to sell his product in non-African markets.

Thus in summary Kente was able to dominate the African market because of segregation and the culturally specific nature of his product but he was unable to sell his product in the non-African market for the same reasons. He could thrive — but only within limits. This contradiction at the base of Kente's position to a large extent determined the shape and development of his career as well as his ideology and to some extent his artistic practice.

From Sikalo to the present

His first major production, *Sikalo,* was originally produced independently. At that time however only Union Artists could open the door for him to the affluent audiences of white Johannesburg which *King Kong* had so successfully exploited. Kente therefore offered his production to them. Thereafter, having experienced the price of their 'assistance', Kente was understandably firmly against co-operating with white managements in South Africa. He nevertheless made repeated efforts to gain access to more lucrative markets. In 1971 he was planning to film *Zwi* and tour the live production in Zambia and East Africa. In 1972 he announced plans to take *Lifa* and *Sikalo* to London for a 'working holiday'. A performance of *Zwi* at the University of the Witwatersrand Great Hall was arranged. Later *How Long* was presented at a theatre in central Johannesburg. All these efforts to expand his activities beyond black areas were not successful.

Kente's position during most of this period expressed itself in the ideology characteristic of business seeking to remove restrictions on expansion and profit, namely liberal multiracialism. An insistence on black nationalism or consciousness would have removed the rational justification for his efforts to perform his plays to non-African audiences. The Playwright's Boycott of the 1960s, as in the case of Fugard, was a touchstone:

> "When I went overseas recently, I tried to show playwrights that they were achieving nothing by refusing to let their plays be staged in South Africa because of the country's colour policies." (*Post*, 14.9.69)

In 1971 he said: "Of course, my greatest wish is to see *Zwi* playing before a white audience here at home." (*The World*, 8.1.71) A year later when asked whether it was true that he once said he performed his plays in Soweto to perfect them for white audiences in town, he replied: "I think this sort of art is meant for people, be they black, maroon or mustard." (*S'ketsh'*, Summer 1972, p.10)

In the early 1970s however Kente saw his predominance in the performing arts in black areas threatened by renewed effect by white entrepreneurs and by the West Rand Bantu Board itself to enter or gain control of his preserve.[4] This compounded his frustration at the failure of his efforts to expand his activities and had the effect of strengthening his sectional i.e. black nationalist, antagonisms at the expense of his class i.e. liberal multiracialist, attitudes. His plays of the period reflect this ideological shift — *How Long, Too Late* and *I Believe*.[5]

In 1976 his own 'radicalization', together with the situation in the country at large, led to his arrest. It is significant that this took place during the first attempt to make a film financed completely with 'black capital'. Obviously after his detention it was necessary to rebuild his financial fortunes. *Can You Take It*, an innocuous musical, was the result. Unfortunately for Kente another factor peculiar to the entertainment industry re-asserted itself at this point — as it had already in the pre-1976 period. The black urban audience had become radicalized by the events of 1976 so that any attempt to return to the 'innocent' days of *Sikalo, Lifa* and *Zwi* was not acceptable to them and therefore not a paying proposition. Rebuilding his fortunes thus involved a return, in however guarded a way, to the political arena. Thus we had *The Load,* a moving play about the miseries of the migrant labour system.

The contradictions in Kente's position continue to drive him on and we see him trying to make a breakthrough into commercial television — not channel 2/3 (i.e. 'black television'), where obviously the profits are more slender, but channel 1 ('white television'). Rebuffed, the frustrated Kente produces in 1982 yet another political play, more militant than all the others.

A Particular Case

So far we have had occasion to describe the nature of the particular contradictions Kente embodies in South African society in terms of how they manifest themselves in relation to government, white business and white markets. In order to examine how they manifest themselves in relation to the oppressed majority in South Africa — his audiences and those who will never see a single one of his plays — it will be necessary to examine the work itself. I have selected his play *Too Late* as a particularly illuminating example.

The story of the play goes like this: Saduva, who lives in the northern Transvaal, loses his parents and comes to live with his maternal aunt, Madinto, in Soweto. Madinto, who runs a shebeen, has a crippled daughter, Ntanana. Saduva meets Totozi, her friend, and they fall in love. Troubles however begin to multiply as Saduva struggles to get the necessary stamp in his pass permitting him to work in Johannesburg — though he is aided in this by the priest, Mfundisi, and Dr Phuza. A zealous and revengeful cop, Pelepele, not only hounds Saduva over his pass but arrests Madinto for selling liquor illicitly. With Madinto in prison Saduva and Ntanana are destitute. Then Saduva himself is arrested and imprisoned for a pass offence. Ntanana is murdered by Pelepele as she tries to prevent the arrest. Saduva emerges embittered from prison and in one version of the play almost kills Pelepele. He is prevented by Offside, the local gossip, a layabout and a friend of Saduva's. At the end Saduva, Madinto and Totozi are re-united.

One of the strengths of Kente's theatre is the accuracy and sympathy with which he portrays the positive aspects of majority urban culture, for example, the supportiveness of the family, which extends beyond blood relations into the community itself. Saduva's predicament is not solely the concern of Madinto, Ntanana or even Totozi. Offside, Dr Phuza and Mfundisi all involve themselves in the effort to help him. This element of the indigenous culture has to an extraordinary degree survived the process of urbanization and economic exploitation.

The cultural sympathy Kente evinces in depicting his people's life is exemplified by his treatment of Madinto, the shebeen-owner. Unlike the shebeen queen cliché of *King Kong, Shebeen, Nongogo*[7] and other products of white mythology, Madinto is first a woman and a mother. The reason for her being a shebeen-owner emerges clearly. She is a generous and loving *person* who in order to maintain herself and her daughter is forced to sell liquor and risk imprisonment. Kente does not hide the ugliness and degradation to be found in Soweto society but the supportive strengths and human affections sometimes transfigure them. This is beautifully crystallized in the image of the toy and the rubbish bin.

Madinto has just been released from prison. She does not yet know that her daughter, Ntanana, is dead:

> *Madinto looks worn out and worried. Slowly walking, she keeps looking around as if asking 'Where now, my Lord?' Her eyes suddenly land on a toy next to a dustbin. Her face opens into a glare of joy. She goes to pick it up. Like a little baby she hugs it and admires it.*
>
> Madinto: At least something for Ntanana.

A very warm humour is another of Kente's strengths. This is clearly seen in his handling of the comic character, Offside, who as his name implies exists outside of conventional society and its exigencies. He has no passbook — never had one — has never worked, never paid tax, has no family, no apparent home. His comic function is profound. Because Offside lives beyond the constraints that bind other members of the community, he is free to do or say anything he likes — his role is similar to that of the medieval court jester, the West African *griot* or certain *imbongi* in traditional society. His irreverence and 'madness' are both amusing and deeply satisfying to an audience who in their daily lives constantly have to cope with the irksome realities that Offside completely disregards. On one occasion Offside escapes arrest by slipping out of his jacket. As he grumbles later: "If they miss me, why arrest my jacket. I mean it's no accomplice."

Offside is not only a comic and cathartically anarchic character, he is also the embodiment of *'ubuntu'* — the 'humankindness' of African communal society. Offside has few possessions but what he has he shares. He is the spirit of comedy — an affirmative spirit who embodies the society's strength and *ubuntu* in the midst of poverty and misery. He is the missing factor in most plays by whites about black society.

The Element of Music

Finally Kente's most consummate artistry is expressed in his music. It is the most powerful vehicle for the expression of the emotional or spiritual elements in his plays. As a writer in *Black Review 1972* observed when talking of music in the context of Black Consciousness, black music 'is now being used effectively as a means of communication, often running deeper than words'. It is this ability of Kente's to communicate with his audience 'deeper than words' through his music which makes his political plays more powerful than the script suggests as in the following song from *Too Late:*

Ngabayini lisono sam'	what could it be — my sin?
andilazi lityala lam'	I do not know — my fault
intoni le libadi lam'	what is it — my misfortune?
ububi bam' nobomi bam'	my evil and my life?

kunzim' ukondl' isisu sam'	Hard to fill my stomach
nempahla yabantwana bam'	things for my children
kunzima nomesbenzi kum'	hard my toil
ngabayini lityala lam'	what could it be — my fault?

Kente's strengths therefore spring from a harmony between himself and his community and express powerfully his membership of an oppressed national group. As the veteran actor, Sam Williams, who had long been cynical, said of his work:

> "Man, say what you like about the guy, but hell, the man has got a deep insight into the loves and hates of our people, both petty and genuine."

However we have referred to contradictions in Kente between this sense of national identity and his own class position within that group and in the society. The nature of the *shared* oppression which all black people experience in South Africa because they are black, irrespective of their relation to the means of production, is powerfully depicted in *Too Late*. The system, like the skeleton in the medieval Dance of Death, is no respecter of persons or rank, as is illustrated in the queue at the pass office in *Too Late*. Here Offside, the layabout, Phuza, the doctor, Mfundisi, the priest, and Saduva all stand awaiting the pleasure of the pink gloves and the disembodied voice which is the system.

But it is precisely this humiliation — this lack of recognition of social status — that the upper strata of the black community constantly jib at. In May of the year before *Too Late* was first performed, Soweto traders called for the removal of the requirement that *they* have their passes signed monthly. They did not call for the abolition of this requirement for all. In order to project a strong sense of a classless black community in his plays, Kente has actually had to distort certain realities. He has had to idealize. For instance a more successful Soweto doctor than the relatively shabby (and rare) Dr Phuza (and there are many examples) might have introduced greater social contrast. Such a doctor would have travelled to town in his own Mercedes or his wife's Jaguar sports rather than hobnob with the crowd at the taxi rank.

The contradiction between Kente's racial/national identity and his class position is nowhere better seen than in the play's political statement. In Kente's earlier plays he confined his attention to 'human interest' and a message of hope in times of trouble. In *Too Late* (as in *How Long* and *I Believe*) the human interest and the message are placed in context, that of apartheid South Africa. 'Life' is no longer to blame but instead a racially discriminating system. In *Sikalo,* as in *King Kong* and *No-Good Friday,* it is the tsotsis or the gangsters who terrorize. In *Too Late* it is the officers of the law. Here Kente is concerned to demonstrate the workings and effects of racial discrimination in South Africa. He intends us to see apartheid and its instruments, the pass official and the police in action. We see the pass laws at work, the effects of unemployment, the brutalization of prisons. Through Pelepele, the black police bully, we are shown the system and the man in pink gloves for whom Pelepele is but a tool. In fact, Kente suggests, even the man in pink gloves is ultimately not responsible: "Did I make the damn laws?" he snaps in frustration. The finger points beyond him to the legislators and architects of the apartheid system.

Yet this accurate and forthright indictment is weakened by the contradictions present in Kente's social position. Emerging from the realistic elements in Kente's depiction is a radical rejection of the apartheid system, but thrust on to the play — in defiance and in contradiction of the reality depicted — is a reformist plea for change before it is 'too late'. Kente's working class and lumpen characters say one thing, their creator another.

The radical position is most powerfully expressed by the *majitas,* ex-university or school students who live by crime. In the beginning of the play Matric and Sguqa demonstrate to their friend, Diza, that the traditional method of finding a job is an expensive charade for a black school-leaver. Diza has lost money on fares, they have profited handsomely by crime. In other words in the present system crime pays a graduate better than looking for a job. Here Kente with admirable economy demonstrates the social and political roots of latterday tsotsis.

Then Dr Phuza enters and the following exchange takes place:

Dr Phuza: (*greeting majitas*) Courage, boys.

Majitas: Courage, doc.

Dr Phuza: (*spotting Matric*) Matric, for God's sake, come here. (*He pulls him to one side*) Molimo, Matric, why upset and disappoint your parents as well as your

principal? The most brilliant student at school just decides to destroy his future.
Matric: My parents don't understand, doc.
Dr Phuza: Bosh! That's hot capital bosh. Now tell me something sensible because your parents have asked me to talk with you.
Matric: The question is — what to study, doc. To be a lawyer, a doctor or a teacher?
Dr Phuza: All of them if you like. What's the difference?
Matric: But the streets are overflowing with doctors, lawyers and teachers who to me are second-grade professionals.
Dr Phuza: (*offended*) Are you suggesting that I'm a second grade doctor?
Matric: As long as you are still getting a black wage at hospitals. So it is with lawyers who can never rise to the status of being judges.
Diza: But there are opportunities in the homelands.
Matric: Am I in the homelands?
(*Police whistles*)

Matric is easily able to refute the doctor's arguments. He shows that he understands how racial discrimination has made a mockery of the doctor's ambitions and achievements and caused him, like many other qualified people, to collapse into disillusionment and drunkenness — 'Phuza' means 'drink'. He is giving potent expression to Kente's own frustration.

The raid on Madinto's shebeen follows and then the pass office and its inevitable corollary, the jail. The political statement in these scenes is one Kente still seems prepared to associate himself with i.e. that influx control, job reservation and unemployment have made of the educated Matric and Sguqa hardened criminals and the innocent Saduva is in danger of going the same way. Later after Saduva's arrest Totozi asks him: "Where's your God". Saduva replies: "They did not arrest him with me. I wonder what he would have done if those hooligans (the other prisoners) did to him what they did to me?... By what crime am I here? What's my sin? I hate the whole system."

Here again, as with the *majitas*, the rejection of the system is total, including even that of the society's religion. But now we see Kente preparing to check the anarchic or radical energy of the play. He has already undermined these expressions of rejection by the circumstances within which he places them and the nature of the people who utter them. The *majitas* are criminals and Saduva's outburst is intended to be interpreted as the fruits of bitterness and his corruption in jail. Totozi follows it with 'Lord, no courage'. Saduva has lost courage and given in to the cardinal Christian sin of despair.

This process gathers momentum in the play until at the end the radical discontent of its earlier scenes has been suppressed and a message of moderation substituted. In one version of the play the doctor who had earlier been quite discredited by Matric, offers the final words:

> "...I am afraid unless something is done about this pettiness (i.e. over-zealous enforcement of the laws by policemen like Pelepele!), the law is going to end up with a hot potato in its hands. Can't something be done to curb the bitterness in both young and old before it's
> TOO LATE?"

In the other version it is the priest who is given the final statement:

> Let us ask ourselves these burning questions? Can any force stop the prevalent bitterness in youth like Saduva? *When even ordinary workers and labourers can organize massive strikes without influence nor leadership?* Are these not clear and vivid signs of saturation. That boy will never be the same again. Can't the powers that be do something?
> Doctor: Before it's too late (my italics)

The doctor implies that he finds the status quo, if enforced with more humanity, preferable to the radical and militant alternatives that might result from the anger of youth. Especially revealing however is the alarm with which Mfundisi views signs, particularly visible in the strikes of the early 1970s, that the black proletariat is capable of taking organized mass action by itself without turning to the traditional leaders of the community, the black petit-bourgeoisie. In such a situation Mfundisi and the doctor address a combined appeal to the state to do something to arrest the radicalization of the people's resistance.

Thus just as the contradiction in Kente's position viz-a-vis the white minority expressed itself in an alternation between efforts to expand beyond the limits allowed him as a black businessman and to consolidate his position within those limits — or in the ideological sphere between liberal multiracialist and nationalist positions — so the contradiction between his nationalist identity with his black audiences and his class identity as a businessman whose economic interests were partly identified with those of the (white) bourgeoisie and antagonistic to those of the (black) working class, expressed itself in plays which are possibly the fullest and most humanly rich depiction of the lives of ordinary black people in South African theatre to date but which suppress the political statements which such a depiction demands, substituting for them statements which instead reflect the fear of Kente's class for a truly democratic social transformation i.e. proletarian revolution.

Notes

1. Kuper, Leo, *An African Bourgeoisie* (New Haven, 1965), pp. 265-8. Note, quoting this source does not imply endorsement of its title or findings.
2. Johnson, R.W., *How Long Will South Africa Survive?* (London, 1977), p.84.
3. Kente was of course not the only successful producer of black commercial theatre. His chief rival was Sam Mhangwane and his company, The Sea Pearls. Mhangwane's first play was in Shangane, his mother tongue. His first great success was *The Unfaithful Woman* (first performed in 1965 and still going strong). *Blame Yourself* (1970), *Thembi* (1976) and *Forced Marriage* are other plays by him. The Sea Pearls was an amateur company until recently, though commercially extremely successful and profitable. Mhangwane's plays were moralistic and either 'apolitical' or simply reactionary. *Thembi* for instance was about the need for birth control amongst blacks. The message was enunciated by a white doctor in the play. Mhangwane also has a history of collaboration with white business, whose products he advertised in his plays, with white commercial theatre, e.g. SATO (see note 4) and with the authorities.
4. The South African Theatre Organisation (SATO) was formed by white managements, with the participation of two black theatre personalities, Sam Mhangwane and Steve Moloi, basically as a means to subvert the overseas playwrights' boycott of white theatre in South Africa. Part of the package deal they advocated was one or two performances of their plays to black audiences in the 'townships'. When the West Rand Administration Board (WRAB) was established to administer Soweto and other areas, it imposed tighter censorship and control of performance venues. The board announced plans to establish a cultural organization under the directorship of the British trumpeter, Eddie Calvert. Only members of this 'union' would be allowed performance rights in Soweto. WRAB's cultural section under one Pieterse actually began work on a musical play about Shaka. All these developments so threatened Kente that he took the unusual (for him) step of calling a meeting to discuss them and co-ordinate resistance.
5. This was not the only reason for the radicalization of Kente's work in this period. Kente had begun to employ increasingly younger unknown artists, often school drop-outs. All the plays of this period focus on the lives of young people, and teenagers constituted a high proportion of his audience. This section of the population was volatile and increasingly militant. Also other political plays had been successful and pointed the way for Kente e.g. workshop 71's *Crossroads*, People's Experimental Theatre's *Shanti* (see Kente and others, *South African People's Plays*) and *Sizwe Banzi*.
6. Published in Kente, G, and others, *South African People's Plays* (Heinemann's, 1981). First performed in Soweto in February 1975. In March it was banned but subsequently the ban was lifted on condition cuts were made — largely of the homosexual rape scene in prison.
7. *Shebeen* by Cyril Chosack, directed Bill Brewer, Cape Town, 1959, and *Nongogo* by Athol Fugard (1959), published in *Dimetos and Two Early Plays* (O.U.P., 1977).

BOOK REVIEWS

THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE IN THE AFRICAN REVOLUTION

Culture, Independance et Revolution en Algerie,
by Sadek Hadjeres, (Temps Actuels, Paris.)

Sadek Hadjeres is an Algerian communist who fought throughout the war of liberation and survived to become an elder statesman of the Algerian Left. This book contains, firstly, a reprint of a long article which he wrote in 1960, at the height of the liberation struggle, and, secondly, his reflections in 1980 upon the progress made since independence.

His theme is the cultural problem of a colonised people. In his 1960 article, he traces the attitudes of four generations spanning the colonial period. The first generation (those who were already adults when French rule was imposed) neither knew nor wanted to know anything outside traditional culture. As far as possible they refused to learn French or to send their children to French schools.

The second and third generations were those who felt the full impact of cultural imperialism. They sought French education because it meant access to science, to technology, to the modern world. They absorbed all it had to offer them and they endured an agonising crisis of identity as a result. They could not accept the propositions that their own language, their own traditions and their own history were all inferior. Yet they were not conscious of possessing anything which they could confidently oppose to the overwhelming self-confidence of the conqueror. So they were left regarding their traditional culture with a mixture of affection and contempt, French culture with respect tinged with cynical reservations, unable to accept anything wholeheartedly.

The fourth generation was the generation of the revolution, whose decision to fight for independence was accompanied by a sudden, spontaneous, astonishing wave of rediscovery and enthusiasm for national culture.

Hadjeres describes his four generations with warm humanity and humour. Though they are specifically Algerian, every African will recognise them. Their experience has been the universal experience of Africa.

His consideration of the post-independence era is also of interest far beyond the frontiers of Algeria. The cultural problems which free Algeria has had to face are again problems which are found, either in the identical form or in related forms, throughout post-colonial Africa. The national language of Algeria is Arabic. That sounds simple, until certain facts are taken into consideration. Firstly, Arabic is not the mother tongue of all Algerians. There are also Berber languages of great antiquity. What is to be their role? How is the danger of divisions between Arabic speakers and Berber speakers to be combatted? Secondly, the Arabic spoken by the man in the street differs considerably from the classical Arabic of the Koran or the written Arabic which is common to the whole of North Africa and the Middle East. The question of the Koran is, of course, both cultural and religious. Even atheists recognise the Koran as a fundamental part of Arab culture, but to allow it too elevated a place is to open the door to those in whose hands Islam can be turned into an instrument of reaction. Refusal to recognise local dialects of Arabic may result in excluding the working class from access to administrative posts and the professions, but nobody would wish the recognition of local dialects to be pushed so far as to destroy Arabic as an international language.

These problems are to some extent peculiar to North Africa, though not wholly dissimilar from problems which exist elsewhere on the continent. The other main cultural problem of Algeria is one with which the whole continent is familiar — the role of the language of the former colonial power. French is the mother tongue of some Algerians and the second language of many more. Hadjeres makes no apology for the fact that his book is written in French. He believes that the Algerians have long since overcome their vulnerability to cultural imperialism and are perfectly capable of using French simply as an instrument for practical purposes. Nevertheless, he sees difficulties. Formal recognition of French as the second language of Algeria does imply a certain continuing relationship with France. It also reduces the resources available for the study of other useful languages such as English and Russian (he deplores the fact that

Russian is virtually unknown in Algeria).

The author approaches all these questions from a standpoint of principled commonsense. He has no doubt about the objectives to be kept in view — national unity, the progress of the working class, the defeat of counter-revolutionary manoeuvres. Progressives throughout our continent have much to learn from his approach.

P.M.

A PLETHORA OF COMPLEX ISSUES

Marxism, Revolution and Democracy, by John Hoffman.
(B.R. Gruner Publishing Co., Amsterdam, 1983.)

In this, his second published book, Dr. Hoffman offers us a set of what appear to be occasional essays, unified by the themes given in his title. In so doing he canvasses a very broad range of issues in philosophy and political theory, a spectrum which includes examinations of the intervention of analytical philosophy in political theory, various bourgeois and Eurocommunist approaches to democracy, and the doctrines concerning State power developed by Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser.

This attempt to treat such a plethora of complex issues in one rather compact volume does not assist the reviewer's task of providing a fair overview of the work before him. Dr. Hoffman hears "an uncomfortable ring of truth" in the accusation that Marxists are uninterested in the perennial debates which exercised political philosophers in the past (pp 7 and 8), and has set himself the task of doing something to remedy the defect. Unfortunately, he has tried to do too much — his 24-page chapter on democracy and permanent revolution, for instance, has an appendage of no less than 107 footnotes to authorities cited — and this has the effect of robbing his own arguments of the necessary conceptual bite.

Hoffman's scholarly examination of the young Engels' review of Carlyle's *Past and Present* is by far the best thing in the book. The paradox of Engels' admiration for the thought of this anti-democratic, anti-revolutionary Tory romantic is sensitively explored, and Hoffman convincingly argues that attention to the review illuminates the intellectual development which led Engels from his "Young Hegelian" period towards a scientific grasp of socialism and materialism.

This type of exegetical exercise is what Hoffman is best at. He has a feel for texts and their relation to other texts. He is at his weakest when it comes to producing conceptual analyses and detailed arguments to sustain his positions, which is why his treatment of linguistic analysis and behaviourism's contribution — or failure to contribute effectively — to political theory is defective in important respects. The nub of Hoffman's argument here is that the apparent common ground between Marxism and the critique of metaphysics offered by British analytical philosophy is chimerical. Marxists, he argues, build upon traditional thought, seeking to answer old questions in new ways, whereas the analysts are dismissive and nihilistic and end by falling into their own brand of metaphysics.

So long as Dr. Hoffman is talking about the positivistic or logical atomist strands of "analytical" philosophy, one feels disinclined to dispute his claims. However, linguistic analysis is far from being uniformly positivistic or even empiricist in outlook. In fact, apart from a shared interest in the problems of language and meaning, the so-called "analysts" can hardly be said to constitute a "school" of any kind. The later work of Wittgenstein is profoundly critical of his (Wittgenstein's) earlier atomistic and positivistic opinions.

Hoffman stresses that the way we use language is also a form of social practice (p6). But it was precisely Wittgenstein who argued that to imagine a language is to imagine "a form of life" and who drew our attention to the connection between social institutions and the rule-governed practice which constitutes language. I think it a pity that these affinities go unnoticed in Hoffman's book, because one has the sense that he is seeking, like a good dialectician, for points of contact as well as points of rupture in the ideas he surveys.

His essay on the concepts of hegemony, dictatorship and state power deals with topics of great interest to Marxists at the present time, and I do not quarrel with his conclusion that any attempts to rethink positions on these matters should begin with the notion of political power as the expression of class struggle. But, once again, he has attempted too wide a survey of the debate to allow for fair treatment of any one point of view. Althusser's theory concerning the "ideological state apparatuses" deserves closer critical attention than Hoffman pays to it.

H.T.

LESSONS FROM A NEIGHBOUR

Mozambique — The Revolution and Its Origins, by Barry Munslow (Longmans, London, New York, Lagos, 1983. UK Price £5.95.)

Armed struggle is not the same as revolution. The major political achievement of FRELIMO in the colonial period was to transform armed struggle into people's revolutionary war, and it is this process which forms the core of this study. Also included are an analysis of the nature of the colonial state as part of the southern African imperialist sub-system, and an outline of the way in which the post-colonial state was established under the leadership of the worker-peasant alliance.

With so much pseudo-scientific nonsense being written about Africa, this solidly researched and carefully written account of a brilliant phase of people's advance must be very welcome, and all of us engaged in our own debates on such issues as education for liberation, the role of women in the struggle and the definition of who the enemy is, will find extremely rich material here.

There is not much on how Mozambique combines its roles as being African, non-aligned and a member of the socialist community, nor is the cultural dimension of the revolutionary process given its full weight. But the central themes of the establishment of people's power are well brought out, and this is a book that can be recommended.

S.A.

A LONG ROAD FROM DIAMONDS TO DEPRESSION

Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa, African class formation, culture and consciousness 1870-1930 Ed. Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone, Longman 1982. 383 pp, £5.95.

This book attempts to cover an enormous series of topics over a lengthy time period, beginning with the discovery of gold and diamonds in South Africa, and continuing until the early depression. The editors have put together a series of essays by different authors, and there is consequently much variation in style as well as subject matter. We are told it is a companion to *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa* (Longman, 1980). The collection of essays has rather a similar impact to a series of papers presented at a workshop or conference, with a rather tenuous thread uniting them. There is a distinctly academic flavour to them as well, although we are not told anything about the authors except their names.

Marks and Rathbone give the various essays a certain cohesiveness in a worthwhile introduction, in which the main thrust of the book is expressed as follows (p7): "...the economic identification of classes is not the *last* word, but merely the first ... it is the political, social, cultural and ideological character of classes which renders them real and recognisable social categories..."

The first two chapters of the book deal with the discovery of diamonds and gold and the major effect this had on the establishment of a proletariat in South Africa. The requirement by the mines of a constant source of cheap labour led to the establishment of the compound system, migrant labour, sexual division of labour, and low wage rates for blacks (who were largely unskilled) compared to whites (many of whom were imported skilled workers who had been paid high wages abroad). The quotations from people writing at the time make interesting reading; indeed, many similar quotes justifying apartheid are still heard today — fundamentally, little has changed.

There is another chapter on the destruction of Zulu society resulting from industrialisation in South Africa. Here, Jeff Guy argues that the surplus value of labour, previously given to the Zulu State, was transferred to the colonial state: hut and wife taxes, among others, forced the Zulu people into the colonial economy. The eventual establishment by the British of 130 Zulu chiefdoms to replace the one unified kingdom had the classic result of "divide and rule" which we see in the Bantustans today.

The chapter by Philip Bonner on the Transvaal Native Congress (1917-1920) is likely to be of particular interest to our readers. (The choice of this particular period is explained by the author as the time when post-World War I inflation was beginning to have a major impact.) Bonner comments that many of the TNC leaders at the time were from the petty bourgeois class, and sets out to explain why they threw in their lot with the proletariat, rather than join the (white) ruling class. His conclusion is perhaps predictable: that racial discrimination led to middle class blacks being paid wages almost as low as proletarian blacks; housing, pass laws, inflation etc. affected both groups alike, and fostered a unity among the two classes that might not otherwise have arisen. Again, some of the quotations from TNC meetings at the time are of interest to the political historian.

The book ends with the chapter on the emergence of an African working class culture. The main themes put forward by David Coplan are again fairly familiar: during early industrialisation, a mixed culture emerged out of the "adapting to conditions" of an "unprecedented mixing of ethnic and racial groups" in Kimberly. As examples, the Coloureds from the Cape brought with them their particular style of music (as well as their shebeens); migrant labour from Basutoland brought with it the self-praise poem, the sefela. Essentially, the insatiable demand for labour on the mines, and the desperate need for jobs by the proletariat, produced a mixed and enriched culture in the areas of language, music, poetry.

Other chapters in the book deal with labour migration in Basutoland, 1870-1885; the sharecropping economy; Sol T. Plaatje; use of leisure time; and even African prayer unions. It seems to this reviewer that the net was cast rather too wide to make a cohesive volume out of all these different aspects, interesting though each is in its own way. Some of the material seems to have been included almost because it had been researched, rather than because it really added to the book. At all events this is a book for those who already know much about the broad political picture in South Africa, and are looking for historical detail. Each chapter is extensively referenced, with much primary source material which will be useful to some of our readers.

S.P.

NATIONALISM AND ANTI-IMPERIALISM IN EAST AFRICA

War in Uganda — The Legacy of Idi Amin, by T. Avirgan and M. Honey (Zed Press, London, 1982. Price £6.50 pb).

The book, as the title suggests, deals with Amin's invasion of Tanzania, an act which signalled not only his downfall, but his disappearance from African history. Has he really disappeared?

The book discusses Amin's corrupt regime, the seeming lack of popular resistance to an unpopular regime, the role of the local bourgeoisie along with the British and Israelis who brought Amin to power. Corruption was rampant during Amin's rule. Even the so-called "anti-corruption squad" organised by Amin's British-born security adviser and dirty tricks expert, "Major" Bob Astles, was a Mafia-style strong arm organisation, used to stamp out "private enterprise" in coffee smuggling in order to consolidate the profitable racket in the hands of a few government officials.

There were killings and murders — decapitated and mutilated bodies found rotting and covered with flies. We are talking of thousands of people brutally and sadistically murdered by Amin's thugs.

There is the other side of the story. Uganda became a haven for diplomatic activity — a class struggle at the diplomatic level. The role of Israel in Uganda — Israel was interested, among other things, in spying on the growing PLO contingent in Uganda — was accompanied by the increasing influence of Libya in Uganda. Britain and America were very active in Uganda. Kenya was very much involved:

> "...Daniel Arop Moi concluded that if Amin was toppled, the main benefactor would be Obote; given that choice, he preferred Amin." (p 15)

There were also conflicts between Amin and Sudan's President Nimeiry because Amin supported the Anyanya insurgents in Southern Sudan (p.34). We should remember that this and much more was happening when Amin was chairman of the OAU and this coincided with the period when the struggle of the Angolan people, to quote one example, was at its height and most critical time. This explains the interest of the revolutionary forces in what was happening in Uganda. Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire was then pushing the FNLA which was operating from his territory, not far from Uganda, against the MPLA.

These conflicts and contradictions, demotions, arrests, killings and much worse in Uganda reflected the broader crisis of colonialism in Africa. But things are not that clear cut. Though the authors have given us more light on this background, seen from a Ugandan perspective, they do generate more heat when they attempt to look at this reality in a broader perspective.

Their book deals with the war situation, and they have interesting things to say about this. I was more interested in what they say about military policy and ethnicity in the Ugandan and Tanzanian armies. They do not argue this; they mention it. What about ethnic and personality-based in-fighting in Uganda?

Uganda attacked Tanzania. Amin tried to use Tanzania as a scapegoat to divert attention from his internal troubles and cover up the massacre in his country. What was the combat readiness of the Tanzanian army?

> "Tanzania had never fought a war since attaining independence, and Amin's invasion found the TPDF (Tanzania People's Defence Force) ill prepared for one. A few Tanzanian soldiers had experienced combat in Mozambique, where a TPDF battalion had been stationed on the Rhodesian border since 1975. A very few Tanzanian instructors had actually gone into Rhodesia to fight alongside the ZANU guerilla fighters they had trained. An even smaller number had experienced combat during periods of training in such places as North Vietnam. Despite a general lack of battle experience, TPDF officers were among the best trained in Africa, a factor that would later prove to be decisive." (p.62)

There is something confusing about this varied experience of the TPDF. The authors confirm that ever since the TPDF was formed, following the dissolution of the Tanzanian army after the 1964 army revolt, the Tanzanians had followed an "independent" and "unconventional" course in defence. To prove this, the authors quote a TPDF officer who says:

> "I was taught guerilla warfare in China and counter-guerrilla warfare at Sandhurst." (p.63)

This is hardly a recipe for a revolutionary people's army. All the same the TPDF won and successfully defeated Amin and his soldiers, thereby liberating Uganda and laying a basis for the progressive forces in Uganda to take over — a precedent in the history of Africa.

But the Ugandans themselves fought alongside the Tanzanian army. There is a lot of this sort of information in the book. What puzzles the reader is a political eclecticism amongst the Ugandan forces which were fighting against Amin. Indeed, besides the 800 Mozambicans (p.67) there were no foreign troops which were involved in the war on the Tanzanian side. The authors are fully behind Tanzania's move and this explains their acceptable assessment.

This book is a contribution to a little-known subject — the military history of Africa.

Now we know more about the reasons why the Tanzanian army was victorious and what forces Lule represented, but we would have liked to know more about the trend of African nationalism Amin represented. Was it nationalism? Was it African? There are so many trends in African nationalism, but they do not take in the excesses of the Amin trend. What made Amin, the chairman of the OAU, have good relations with Ndabaningi Sithole, an ally of Ian Smith? Perhaps this can be a subject matter of their next book.

Nyawuza

THE RUTH FIRST MEMORIAL TRUST

In honour of Ruth First, who was assassinated in Maputo on the 17th August, 1982, the Ruth First Memorial Trust intends to create a resource centre to service and support the study of the history, economics and sociology of South Africa and of other countries in Southern Africa.

The centre will:

Be particularly concerned to copy and transmit materials concerned with such studies to institutions in Africa, and to make them available to scholars and others who are not affiliated to universities.

Act as a trustee for the papers of Ruth First, and other papers and documents donated, lent to, or purchased for, the centre.

Establish the centre initially at a university or other suitable location in Britain where its collection can be housed safely until circumstances properly permit its transfer to South Africa.

Organise occasional lectures in the name of Ruth First.

Provide travel and research grants for suitable candidates to study at the centre.

Fund suitable projects and, as appropriate, publish their findings.

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